2: McCulloch E-4 (1945-51) 1952 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

edited by

DARYLL FORDE

WEST CENTRAL AFRICA

Part II

THE OVIMBUNDU OF ANGOLA

by

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[p. i]

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This study is one part of the Ethnographic Survey of Africa which the International African Institute is preparing with the aid of a grant made by the Secretary of State under the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, on the recommendation of the Colonial Social Science Research Council

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ETHNOGRAPHIC SURVEY OF AFRICA

FOREWORD

The preparation of a comprehensive survey of the tribal societies of Africa was discussed by the Executive Council of the Institute as far back as 1937, but the interruption and restricting of its activities caused by the war resulted in the postponement of the project. Events and developments during recent years, however, have led to a wider recognition of the need for collating and making more generally available the wealth of existing but uncoordinated material on the ethnic groupings and social conditions of African peoples, particularly in connection with plans for economic and social development. Moreover, it appeared that the International African Institute, as an international body which has received support from and performed services for the different Colonial governments, was in a very favourable situation for undertaking such a task. 121

The Institute, therefore, in 1944, applied to the recently established British Colonial Social Science Research Council for a grant from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund to finance the preparation of an Ethnographic Survey of Africa, and a grant was allocated for a period of five years from 1945, and was subsequently extended for a further period of three years. A committee, under the Chairmanship of Professor Radcliffe-Brown, was appointed to consider the scope and form of the survey, and collaboration was established with research institutions in South Africa, Rhodesia, East Africa, French West Africa, Belgium and the Belgian Congo. 122

The aim of the Ethnographic Survey is to present a concise, critical, and accurate account of our present knowledge of the tribal groupings, distribution, physical environment, social conditions, political and economic structure, religious beliefs and cult practices, technology and art of the African peoples. The material is presented as briefly and as consistent a plan as possible, and the texts are supplemented by maps and comprehensive bibliographies. 121

The Ethnographic Survey is being published as a series of separate, self-contained studies, each devoted to one particular people or cluster of peoples. It is hoped that publication in this form will make the results more quickly and readily available to those interested in specific areas or groups. A list of the sections which have already appeared is given on the cover of this volume.

Since the unequal value and the generally unsystematic nature of the available information constituted a chief reason for undertaking this survey, it will be obvious that the material here presented can make no claim to be complete or definitive. Every effort has been made, however, to scrutinise all available literature and to check it by reference to unpublished sources and to workers actually in the field; thus it is intended to present a clear picture of our existing knowledge and to point out the directions in which the need for further studies is most pressing. Any assistance from those who are in a position to remedy deficiencies and correct inaccuracies by providing supplementary material will be 000

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greatly appreciated.

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The International African Institute expresses its thanks to the Colonial Social Science Research Council, for recommending the grant which has made possible the initiation of the work, and also to the many scholars, research workers, administrative officers and missionaries in Europe, South Africa and the various African territories who have so generously responded to our appeals for information and who have spared time to correct and add to the drafts.

We are especially grateful for help given in the preparation of the present volume to the Rev. Dr. G.M. Childs, Principal of the Currie Institute, Angola, who read and checked the text in manuscript; to Mr. C.M.N. White, for providing a linguistic note; and to Mr. J.A. Barnes, for assistance with the kinship section.

DARYLL FORDE,
Director.

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THE OVIMBUNDU OF ANGOLA

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THE OVIMBUNDU OF ANGOLA

GROUPING AND DEMOGRAPHY

NOMENCLATURE

101 The name Ovimbundu, which possibly derives from the same root as *muntu*, seems to have been adopted as a tribal name in fairly recent times, the various groups being formerly known separately as Bailundu, Ciyaka, Viye etc. Correct rendering in native usage is Ovimbundu (singular *Ocimbundu*).(1) variations include mbundu, u'bundu, vimbundu, quimbundu, *kimbundu*(2) etc. *Umbundu* is correctly used adjectivally and to refer to the language.(3) In referring to the tribe the prefixes Ovi- and Oci- are usually retained today to avoid confusion with the *Kimbundu* (also called *Ambundu, Ngola* or *Ndongo*) tribe, located north of the Ovimbundu in Luanda, and related linguistically to the peoples of the Kongo group.(4)

The terms *Vakuanano* (*Vakuanau, Vanano*, or *Muanau*) and *Ovimboli* (*Mbari, Mambari, Mboli*) are sometimes used in the literature as alternative names for the Ovimbundu. *Nano* means "up-country", *Vakuanano* "people of the north".(5) Both van Bulck(6) and Guthrie(7) give it as an alternative name for the Ovimbundu as a whole, while earlier writers restrict its application to one or other group within the tribe. Thus Serpa Pinto(8) and Capello and Ivens(9) use it for the inhabitants of the southern part of the plateau, between Cacondo and Cilengo country.(10) Magyar, on the other hand, uses it as an alternative name for the Bailundu group, who "because of their bravery, are celebrated far and wide, under the feared name *Nanano*".(11)

Mboli, or more correctly *Ovimboli*, is correctly an Umbundu term for those who imitate Europeans or who live near European towns, which are collectively called *lupoli*.(12) It is frequently used by early writers for example, by Livingstone,(13) to refer to the Ovimbundu of the trading caravans.

GROUPING

101 The Ovimbundu do not have a centralised political organisation, but
(3) are divided into a number of chiefdoms, each traditionally under the control of a paramount chief. The following list of chiefdoms is quoted

(1) Childs, 1949, p.xi.
(2) Magyar uses *kimbundu* for the Ovimbundu, but he does not confuse them, as Passport does, with the *Kimbundu* people.
(3) Childs, loc.cit.
(4) Ibid. Capello and Ivens, 1882 (vol.I, p.15) use o'bundu for the language of the Ovimbundu, to distinguish it from the o'bundu of Luanda. They give quimbundu as an alternative for o'bundu, and state that it is a dialect of the lo-ango language.
(5) Childs, personal communication.
(6) 1949, p.179. (7) 1948.
(8) 1881, vol.I, pp.94, 219. (9) 1882, vol.I, p.57.
(10) See also Chatelain, 1894, p.6 and Marquardsen 1939, map.
(11) 1859, p.361.
(12) Childs, 1949, p.19. (13) 1857, pp.91, 271, 384 etc. See also White, 1949.

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from Child's monograph,[1] alternative spellings which occur in the literature being given in brackets. These divisions closely resemble those described in 1799 by the Governor of Benguella,[2] and by Magyar, who lived in and travelled through Ovimbundu country from 1840 to 1857. Ovimbundu today still think of themselves as belonging to one or other of these groups, although owing to the decay of the power of the chiefs, the divisions have largely lost their political significance.[3] Of the twenty-two Ovimbundu chiefdoms, about half were generally tributary to one or other of the larger and more powerful groups, prior to effective Portuguese occupation.[4]

I. *Independent chiefdoms (in approximate order according to the size of their present populations).*

Bailundo	(Bailundu, baIlundo, Balundo; Balhundo)
Viye	(Ovi Ye, Bie, Bihe, Biheno, Biheno)
Bumbu	(Humbu, Hombo, Hombo)
Ciyaka	(Quiyaca, Quieca)
Ngalangi	(Galangue, Galanga, Galangi, Ngalangi)
Civula	(Quibula)
Ndulu	(Andulo, Ondulo, Ondura)
Cingolo	(Quingulo)
Kalukembe	(Caluquembe, Caluquembe, Caluquene)
Sambu	(Sambo, Sambou)
Ekekete	(Quiquete)
Kakonda or Civombo-cowawa	(Cacondo or Quilombo)
Citata	(Quitata)

II. *Chiefdoms generally tributary but not integral parts of the chiefdoms to which they owed allegiance.*

Kasongi[5]	(Cassongue).	Generally tributary to Bailundo.
Ngalanga	(Galanga)	" " " "
Civendo	(Quibundo)	" " " "
Numbu		" " " "
Sanga		" " " "
Cenga	(Chienga)	" " " "
Ciperyo	(Quiperyo)	" " " "
		or Bumbu.
Mbongo	(Bongo).	Generally tributary to Bumbu.
Elendo	(Lendo).	" " " Ciyaka.

LOCATION

The homeland of the Ovimbundu is the Benguella Highland in west central Angola. Strictly speaking, the Highland comprises those regions which have

(1) 1949, p. 168.
(2) Annaes Maritimos e Coloniaes, 4a. Ser., pp.147-161. (Quoted by Childs)
(3) Childs, personal communication.
(4) i.e. prior to about 1909.
(5) Kasongi is not mentioned by Magyar, and Childs believes it to be one of the most recently-formed groups of Ovimbundu.

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an elevation of 4,000 feet or more, and the boundaries of Ovimbundu territory closely correspond with this area.(1) Ovimbundu are found also in regions adjoining the Highland, and Umbundu-speaking groups stretch as far as the Atlantic coast-line, between the towns of Loanda and Benguella. Ovimbundu country is divided between the Administrative Provinces of Bie, Benguella, and Huila, in the Districts of Benguella, Huambo, Cuanza Sul, Bie and Huila.

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NEIGHBOURING TRIBES

To the east and south-east of the Ovimbundu are the Luimbe, Luchazo, Mbunda, Mbwela, etc., for all of whom the Ovimbundu use the derogatory term *Ngangela*, or *Ganguella* in the Portuguese version.(2) The Ovimbundu attitude towards these people is illustrated in the proverb "as a grass hut is not a house, so an *ocingangela* is not a person".(3) This eastern region was a favourite hunting-ground for slave-traders from Viye and Bailundu.

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To the north-east are the Chokwe, Bangala and Songo peoples, who are related to the Lunda group.(4)

To the west and south of the Ovimbundu are cattle-keeping peoples - the Nganda, Ndombe, Henya, Cilenge, Cipungu, Huila, Nyaneka, Mulondo and Khumbi. These form a fairly homogeneous cultural group, and are in certain respects similar to the southern Ovimbundu.(5) Childs, following Estermann,(6) uses the collective name "Bangala" in referring to them, but in order to avoid confusion with the Bangala tribe to the north-east, this usage is not adopted here. Still further south are the Ambo and Herero, also cattle-keepers.

The tribes to the north of the Ovimbundu - Esela, Cipala, Lupolo, Ndongo or Kimbundo etc. - belong to the western or Angola 'cluster' of the Congo people.(7) The Esele (Vesele) and Mbui (Amboim) may also belong to this group, but have not yet been surely classified.(8) The northern tribes are sometimes collectively called by the Ovimbundu *Olongoya*, a term which implies that they speak a language unintelligible to the Ovimbundu, but which has not the derogatory sense of "*Ngangela*".(9) Unlike the eastern peoples, the peoples to the south and north of the Ovimbundu are recognised as *omanu* (people), or even *vakueta* (comrades).(10)

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DEMOGRAPHY

The 1940 Angola Census(11) estimates the number of Ovimbundu (Mundo) as 1,331,087, of whom 694,504 are females, 636,583 males. Childs(12) points out that this number should be decreased by at least 150,000 owing to the erroneous inclusion of several small non-Ovimbundu tribal groups.

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(1) See map.
(2) See McCulloch, 1951, p.32.
(3) The term used for "person" in the proverb is *omanu*, a "potential" person - a word used for adolescents. See pp. below.
(4) The Bangala are sometimes held to be related to the Congo rather than the Lunda group.
(5) See below, p.
(6) 1935, pp.45-49.
(7) Childs, 1949, p.8.
(8) Ibid.
(9) Ibid., p.189.
(10) Ibid., p.x.
(11) Quoted by Mendes Correia, 1943, p.421, and Barrento, 1948.
(12) 1949, p.8.

161 But this number is probably made up by Ovimbundu emigrants to other colonies and to the Union of South Africa.(1)

162 There are no recent estimates of the populations of the various groups of Ovimbundu. Magyar in 1859 however gave figures which are of some interest.(2) He estimated the total Ovimbundu ("Kimbundu") population at 1,880,000, but points out that this number includes 300,000 from tribes which, though culturally resembling the Ovimbundu, are not linguistically related to them (Kissama, Mupinda, Mussumbe, Lunseke, Manyemba and Massongo). Another 300,000 are from tribes which Magyar includes as "Kimbundu" speaking, but which are not generally reckoned as Ovimbundu today. (Nganda, Esele, Humbi, Lupolo, Hako and Kakingi.) This would leave 1,280,000, a figure remarkably near to the present estimate. The following are his figures for the separate groups:-

	Area in sq.m.	Population
Viye (Bie)	800	120,000
Bailundu	2,000	450,000
Wambo (Wambo)	?	120,000
Civaka (Kisaka)	?	75,000
Ngalangi (Galangue)	1,000	250,000
Civula (Kibala)	200	35,000
Ndulu (Andulo)	160	40,000
Sambu (Sambos)	120	30,000
Kakonda (Cacconda)	300	100,000
	Total	1,220,000

There are no recent estimates of tribal density. The 1940 Census(3) gives density in the Provinces as :-

Bie Province(4)	1.5 per sq. km.
Benguella	8.5 per sq. km.
Huila	2.0 per sq. km.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT(5)

TOPOGRAPHY

133 The homeland of the Ovimbundu corresponds closely with the highest part of the Benguella Highland, i.e. the area lying between 11° and 15° South Latitude, and meridians 14° and 18° E. Altitude in this region is everywhere over 4,000 feet, and the western ridges rise as high as 9,000 feet, forming the highest north-western portion of the ancient South African sub-continental plateau. To the east, elevation drops gradually from the Kwanza valley towards the Kassai and Zambesi rivers. To the west, descent is irregular - in places almost precipitous - to the coastal plain. This plain and the stretch of higher country (below 3,200 feet) which separates it from the Highland proper, form an arid and sparsely-populated region which is a northerly extension of the Kalahari, Namieb and Onaheke deserts.

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.9. (2) Magyar, 1859, pp.125, 239, 361 etc.
(3) Quoted by Serpente, 1948.
(4) This figure is of little significance since Bie Province includes large sparsely-inhabited non-Ovimbundu areas in south-east Angola.
(5) Childs 1949, chap.I. Fitzgerald 1948, pp.278f. Hambly 1934, pp.108f.

The two largest rivers flowing from the Highland are the Kwanza and the Kunene, both of which flow into the Atlantic Ocean. Between them are the Keve, the Balombo and the Katumbela. The Kubango rises near the source of the Kunene and flows southwards towards the Kalahari Desert. 133

SOILS AND VEGETATION

The foundation of the plateau is a vast slab of primeval crystalline rock, which frequently outcrops in the form of isolated rocks or of massive peaks. Some of these outcrops remain bare, while others are hidden by laterite and soil formed by rock decomposition. Sediments overlying the rocks include unfossiliferous sandstones and conglomerates, considered to be of Palaeozoic age. Much of the soil is poor, in many areas impoverished by use and by erosion; there are however a few alluvial deposits, and on the whole the soil is of better quality than in the adjoining regions to the east, north and south. 134 133

Differences in vegetation between the Highland and the lower zone towards the coast are striking. Characteristic feature of the coastal area is the baobab *(Adansonia digitata)* and in the better-watered areas tropical forests occur. The Highland proper was until recently well-covered with a variety of trees; today, however, except in isolated areas in Bailundu and other regions, grasslands have taken the place of forest and woodland. Native methods of agriculture and annual fires have caused much deforestation, and this has been accentuated by the demands of European settlement and of the Railway, which up to the present time uses principally wood for fuel. 137

CLIMATE

The Highland is well within the Tropical Zone, but altitude and the effect of the south-western Antarctic current combine to produce a moderate climate. The annual variation of temperature is relatively slight; a day's maximum is seldom above 90°F, and may be as low as 60°, but the usual maximum is around 80°. The minimum of 32° or even 30° is sometimes reached in the winter (about May 20th - July 20th), but more usually the minimum is 40° to 50° in the winter, and 50° to 55° for the rest of the year. There is considerably daily variation, especially in the winter, when differences of 42° are often registered. 132

Mean annual rainfall varies from 40 to 60 inches, according to region. In the Highland the rains begin with a few showers during September, increase during October and November, have a break of two to four weeks in December, January or February, and continue until the end of April. The heaviest falls are usually in November and December, occasionally in March.

TRADITIONS OF ORIGIN AND HISTORY (1)

The Ovimbundu people represent a fusion of diverse stocks, chiefly of the Southern Bantu and of the Congo or Central Bantu peoples. The ruling 174 167

(1) This section is a summary of the detailed account given by Childs 1949, pp. 144-151.

families, probably for the most part of Lunda origin, entered the Benguella Highlands during the seventeenth century and began to found their respective kingdoms. The tribes whom they encountered appear to have belonged to the cattle-keeping Ndombe-Nganda or to the Nganguela group.(1) Childs suggests that the upper strata of these local populations must have moved on southwards with their cattle to join related stocks in the border regions, while the masses stayed behind to form the nucleus of the Ovimbundu. The cultural influence of these early inhabitants on the Ovimbundu seems to have been slight, except in the south-west, particularly in Kalukembe, where a semblance of the cattle-culture complex remains, together with a recognition of kinship ties with southern neighbours (see below). The linguistic influence of the Southern Bantu (Ndombe-Nganda) group in the south and west has however been considerable. It is noteworthy that over the whole Ovimbundu region a single language has developed with only small dialectal differences, and that although commercial contact has assisted this development, it has not been fostered by political union between the various segments of the Ovimbundu.

TRADITIONS

Each of the principal groups listed above (page 2) has separate legends of origin. Usually these traditions refer to the birthplace and adventures of the ancestors of the chiefly families, and only mention the indigenous inhabitants. Childs has made a careful and lucid summary of the traditions of the various groups;(2) these are therefore only very briefly outlined below.

Ndulu. There is evidence that Ndulu may be one of the oldest Ovimbundu kingdoms. The progenitor of the ruling dynasty is said to have come from the region near the confluence of the Kwanza and Lumbo rivers, and to have conquered and expelled the Luimbe, who live today to the east of Ndulu. This migration may have been a result of the prolonged wars between the Portuguese and the Kingdom of Angola,(3) which ended in 1671.

Bailundu. The Bailundu dynasty is said to have its origin in Cipala, a region which remained subject to Bailundu until the end of the nineteenth century, and from which, according to tradition, the king's principal wife comes. Childs estimates the date of the foundation of the dynasty at not earlier than about 1700. The Sambu ruling family is said to descend either from a woman of Bailundu stock or from common stock with the Bailundu.

Viye. Versions of the Viye legend are recorded by Tucker,(4) Serpa Pinto,(5) Silva Porto,(6) and Wagner,(7) and these do not all agree. According to the most widely-known version today, Viye, an elephant-hunter of the Mbwi people, tracking game down the Kwanza valley, met and married a princess of the Songo people; their son, Ulumbo, founded the Viye chiefdom. From documentary evidence Childs estimates that this must have been in about 1750. This version also suggests that the original inhabitants were of the Nganguela group of tribes.

(1) See above, p.3.
(2) Op.cit., pp.179-81.
(3) To the north of the present Ovimbundu country.
(4) 1927, pp.94f.
(5) 1881, vol.I, pp.156f.
(6) 1942, pp.169-71.
(7) 1889, pp.264f.

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Magyar's account of the Viye legend is of interest since it suggests a direct link between the movements of the Ovimbundu ancestors and contemporary migrations of the Lunda in the Congo basin and western Angola.(1) Magyar relates that the forefathers of the Viye came from the land of the Mercpa (or Lunda(2)) under the two chiefs Kinguri and Schakambindi, conquered the Songo, and settled on the Lunda river, engaging in agriculture between raids. The tribe subsequently sub-divided, one group going southwards to the Kukema river, where Ngangela were living, to found the chiefdom of Viye.

Ngalangi tradition is the only one which attempts a creation myth. Feti, the first chief of Ngalangi, is said to have "come down from above"; having no wives, he went to a lagoon of the Runese river and caught them as they came out of the reeds. Sons of Feti drove out the Ngangela from what is now Ngalangi country, and founded their principal village.(3) Childs estimates that this must have taken place in about 1750. The village was later attacked unsuccessfully by Ngangela, and this is one of the very few traditions which mention resistance met by the invaders.

Wambu. The first chief, Wambu Kalunga, is said to have come from Sele country, north-west of Bailundu. The Nganda, who now live south-west of Umbundu country and are of Southern Bantu stock, were previously living in Wambu country. The founder of the Ciyaka royal family is said to have been a relative of Wambu Kalunga, and to have driven out the Nkumbe (also of Southern Bantu stock) from Ciyaka country, probably during the first half of the seventeenth century. Wambu Kalunga is said to have been also the progenitor of the dynasties of *Cingolo, Citeta* or *Cikuma, Kalukembe, Elendo* and *Ekotetu*.(4)

Kakonda, the founder of the Kakonda kingdom, was of northern stock, but born in Ngalangi, whence he was sold as a slave to Benguella. He escaped with his wife, Cilombo, and set up the present kingdom in about 1760.

Congi, Sungo, Nambo and *Kasongi* on the northern flank of Bailundu have only recently become Umbundu-speaking. *Kasongi*, one of the largest Bailundu tributaries, has however had a line of Umbundu-speaking chiefs for more than 100 years. *Civulu* was listed by Magyar as tributary to Ciyaka. *Kalukembe* is of interest in that it is more clearly linked than other sections of the Ovimbundu with the Nganda-Ambo group. Factors which point to this closer link include: the similarities in language between the two groups; the inheritance of the Kalukembe kingship in the maternal line, as among the Nganda-Ambo group, and not in the paternal line, as among other Ovimbundu;(5) and the fact that the Nganda-Ambo, who have an exogamous clan organisation, may marry in any of the related Nganda-Ambo groups, and for this purpose include Kalukembe but not other Ovimbundu.(6)

(1) McCulloch 1951, *op.cit.*, 22ff., 27ff.
(2) Dias de Carvalho 1890, p.66.
(3) According to the same legend, where the Ngalangi created their lands of food and household goods, sticks took root and became the sycamore figs which to this day encircle the capital village. This circle of trees is a characteristic of the oldest Ngangela villages.
(4) Childs *op.cit.*, pp.178, 225.
(5) Although descent among Ovimbundu commoners is in the maternal line.
(6) Childs, *op.cit.*, p.178.

EARLY HISTORY

175 The earliest records of native migration in what is now Angola concern the warrior hordes of Jagas (Jaggas, Jakas, Jaggas, Giaghis, Giaki, Ayaka etc.), who from about 1560 onwards were reported in north-western Angola and the adjacent Kingdom of Congo.(1) Various attempts have been made to identify the Jagas. Van Wing(2) and Torday(3) hold that the name is derived from the Bayaka tribe on the middle Kwango; Battell's account would seem to identify them with the Bangala (Imbangala) of Jaga Cassange, who are known to have been invading western Angola at this time. Childs points to suggestive links of the Jagas with Ovimbundu dynasties: e.g. the Ciyaka group of Ovimbundu, who recognise the region of Cassange as the location of their earliest ancestral tombs. He also shows that certain Jaga customs as described by the earlier writers resemble those connected with Ovimbundu kingship. Childs suggests that the name Jaga (which seems to derive from the verb "to fight" -oku yaka; "they fight" = a yaka or vayaka) was originally a name given to these hordes or to their leaders by the African peoples whom they fought and conquered.(4)

175 177 European contacts with the people of the Benguella Highland took place in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, before the migrations had settled down. Dutch and Portuguese raids took place in 1645, 1650 and 1661, and since fire-arms appear to have been used at that time by the Africans, it seems likely that Ovimbundu dynasties had them when they came into the region.(5) In 1760 the throwing open of the hinterland to Euro- [521] pean traders(6) led to greatly increased commercial contact, and this in turn gave rise to wars between the native rulers and the Portuguese. In 1774-6 a war was fought between the Portuguese and their native allies and the kings of Bailundu and Cingolo. Ciyaka and neighbouring kingdoms continued to raid the European garrisons until recent times, and Europeans appear not to have penetrated Ciyaka until almost the turn of the present century.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF OVIMBUNDU TRADE

175 4139 There are indications that before the end of the eighteenth century the Ovimbundu were becoming, or had become, traders. The slave-trade was formally prohibited in 1836,(7) and subsequently European traders began to move inland in greater numbers in search of ivory, settling especially in Bailundu and Viye. This began a period of great commercial development among the Ovimbundu, the principal commodities being ivory, beeswax, and, in the third quarter of the century, rubber.(8) Trading caravans of the Ovimbundu (under the names *Mambari*, *Eihamba*, *Bailundus*, or *Mbundus*) became

(1) See especially Battell, pp.191. (2) 1921, p.196.
(3) 1925, map facing p.282.
(4) Childs, op.cit., pp.195-6. (5) Ibid., p.195.
(6) Entry of European traders to the hinterland had been forbidden by law in 1829, although the law had become largely a dead letter.
(7) Although contraband slave-trade continued until late in the nineteenth century, the slaves being used for the transport of ivory and other goods from the hinterland to the coast.
(8) These were at first one-way agreements, allowing Ovimbundu to trade in many lands, since it was to the advantage of the rulers of these countries. The Ovimbundu are said in fact to have discouraged the tribes to the east from venturing out on their own account. See Livingstone 1857, p.304, Cameron 1877, p.404.

known throughout the territory bounded by the Congo river, the Great Lakes, and the Kalahari desert. Most other Ovimbundu kingdoms fell into line with the trading activities of Bailundu and Viye. By the middle of the century this had resulted in a loose system of alliances and mutual understandings to the effect that the traders and caravans of each kingdom would be permitted to enter or travel through the others. At time these "trade-agreements" seem to have embraced all the Umbundu-speaking peoples, but violations were frequent, especially between Viye and the Ciyaka-Cingola-Citata group. Trade-agreements were also made beyond the Umbundu-speaking area, e.g. with the Mwata Yamvo of the Lunda.(1)

From roughly the turn of the twentieth century the large-scale trading activities of the Ovimbundu declined. Military occupation of Viye and Bailundu took place in 1890, and from that date European traders began to settle in Viye and Bailundu in ever-increasing numbers. In 1902 the Bailundu war occurred, after which the occupation of the whole of Umbundu country was quickly completed. This campaign paralysed trade, which was already suffering because of a great fall in rubber prices. Other factors which hastened the decline of Ovimbundu trading activities(2) include the famine in Ngangela country in 1911, the disappearance of illicit slave-traffic, and, finally, the building of the Benguella Railway (commenced in 1904), which put an end to the porterage and trading caravans of former days.(3)

LANGUAGE

"Umbundu is usually(4) associated with Ambo, Herero and kindred languages. It would however seem that more comparative study is required to show how real this apparent relationship is: it appears to be especially based on the fact that Umbundu uses prefixial o- with many of its noun classes. In general structure, however, Umbundu shows remarkable similarity in grammar and vocabulary to Luena, Luchazi and other languages of the Ganguella [Ngangela] group.

Features of Umbundu which are worthy of note are:-

i. Presence of nasal vowels before and after 'l', 'h', 'v' and 'w'.

ii. In certain nasal compounds, subtraction occurs, involving the second consonant, but not the nasal, e.g. muntu is realised as omuntu.

iii. Compared with the Lunda-Luena languages Umbundu exhibits an unusually large number of defective verbs.

iv. A vowel system of five vowels.

(1) These were at first one-way agreements, allowing Ovimbundu to trade in many lands, since it was to the advantage of the rulers of these countries. The Ovimbundu are said in fact to have discouraged the tribes to the east from venturing out on their own account. See Livingstone 1857, p.304, Cameron 1877, p.404.
(2) For much greater detail concerning the rise and fall of Ovimbundu trade see Childs op.cit., pp.191-215.
(3) Ibid.
(4) Dale 1945, p.191; Guthrie 1948, p.64; Childs 1949, p.8.

197 v. Two significant tones on radicals; no tonal alternance on nominal suffixes. In this Umbundu resembles the Lunda-Luena languages."(1)

Childs(2) classifies Umbundu with the Ambo-Herero group as belonging to the Western Province of Southern Bantu. He suggests(3) that the similarity of Umbundu to the Ngangela languages is due to the dominating influence of the Umbundu spoken in Viye (where the racial stock had a greater Ngangela element) over that spoken in other regions. This dominating influence may be explained by the relatively large number of missions in the Viye region, and presumably also by the activities of Viye traders.(4)

197 177

Dialectal differences in Umbundu speech are very small. There are certain noticeable differences between "up-country" and "down-country", roughly divided by the Keve and Kunene rivers. Each of the outlying regions has its own peculiarities, often due to foreign influences.(5)

It has been mentioned above that while the homeland of the Ovimbundu is in the Benguella Highland, the use of the Umbundu language is now more widespread. The Nganda and the Hanya tribes are increasingly using it, and the mixed populations of the coastal towns of Lobito, Katumbela and Benguella use it almost exclusively. It is also spoken in Nova Redondo, in Mossamedes, and along the Benguella Railway. This process of "Umbundu-ization" does not seem however to be taking place in Cipala, Sele, or Musende, in spite of the long period during which they owned the king of Bailundu as their overlord.(6)

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND DRESS

142 Among the Ovimbundu two main physical types are distinguished by some writers:(7) one is of brown skin colour and slender build, the other a shorter, darker type with more facial hair. No correlation of these types with chiefly families on the one hand and commoners on the other has been recorded. Hambly(8) gives several good illustrations of physical types among the Ovimbundu, and contrasts them with those found among neighbouring tribes.

301 304 291 The Ovimbundu retain distinctive styles of dress, ornament, tooth mutilation (a V-shaped notch in the upper incisors), scarification and hair-dressing. Women are dressed in trade cloth: unmarried girls wear one piece of cloth which hangs from the armpits to the knees, while a married woman drapes herself with two pieces of cloth, a skirt hanging from her girdle, and an upper piece so folded as to hold her baby tightly on her back. Certain cloth designs are considered appropriate for girls, others only for older women. Men now dress usually in European fashion.

(1) This linguistic note has been written by C.M.N. White.
(2) Op.cit., p.169. (3) p.190, fn.2.
(4) See above, pp.6-9.
(5) Childs op.cit., p.190, fn.2. See also Kalukembe, p.7 above.
(6) Childs, op.cit., pp.11, 179-80.
(7) See Hambly 1934, p.128; Cashmore 1944, p.86.
(8) Op.cit., plates XLIX-LIV.

2: McCulloch E-4 (1945-51) 1952 FP13 Mbundu FP13

Ovimbundu women braid their hair neatly in strands across their foreheads, and decorate the braids with small blue and white trade beads.(1) 302

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

AGRICULTURE(2)

Main crops are maize and several kinds of beans. Subsidiary crops include: sorghum, kaffir corn, emmer wheat, manioc, peanuts, squash, sweet potatoes, garden vegetables, a little rice, cotton, sugar-cane and tobacco. Fruit-trees such as the papaya, banana, loquat, tangerine, lemon, peach and apple, are increasingly cultivated, and, to some extent, coffee. Upland fields for the principal crops of maize and beans are cultivated during the rainy season, and, to piece out the harvest, river gardens for secondary crops are used in the dry season. 241

The principal corn-gardens.

Traditionally men work with their wives in the heavier labour of clearing new fields, but today the demands of contract labour are such that few are able to help.(3) Before the rains begin in early September, women prepare the fields for planting. If a new plot is to be used, it is first cleared with a small hatchet. Tree stumps are left two or three feet high; after the field has been cultivated for a year or two and the tree-stumps have dried and rotted, they are burned off and cleared away. When the rainy season has set in and the ground is thoroughly wet, the main corn-fields are planted. The ground is dug with a hoe and ridged slightly, the ridges following the contour of the land, so that the rain will not wash away the soil, and so that the moisture will be held. Occasionally irrigation is used, small channels being led from hillside streams to the gardens. Maize is dropped by hand on the ridges, and the seeds covered with the foot. Beans and squash are planted with the corn. In January there is usually a break in the rains, and this is the time when the bean crop ripens. (This is a critical period, since if the dry spell lasts too long the corn crop is blighted, but if it is too short the beans will not ripen.) The vines are pulled up and put in the field hut to dry. Later the beans are beaten out of the pods and stored. 241 [462] [312]

In each field there is a grass hut, which is used as a shelter from showers, as a place for drying beans or corn, and as living quarters when the corn is sprouting. (When a woman decides that it would be more convenient to live by her field, which requires constant guarding against birds, she may live in her field hut with her children for several weeks.) 241 343

As the dry season commences, the corn crop ripens. When it is ripe, it is plucked, dried and shelled, and stored in the *osila*, a granary on posts, for future use. One *osila* is used for each household. When required, the corn is hulled and pounded into the meal which forms the staple food.(4) [257] [252]

(1) Hambly pp.129-32, and illustrations; Childs, personal communication.
(2) Cashman, 1944, pp.73-8; Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.146-8, and Childs, personal communication. (3) Childs, personal communication.
(4) For a good description of the preparation of corn-meal, see Cashman, pp.77-8.

242 When a field is wearing out, the corn growing shorter and bearing
244 fewer ears to the stalk,(1) the woman makes a final planting of corn, sticking cuttings of manioc between the rows. Most of these cuttings take root and grow. It takes two or three years for the tubers of this plant to mature in an old field, but in some parts of the country where manioc is set in new land it matures within a year. The leaves of the plant are used as a vegetable with corn-meal, and manioc meal is used as a basic substitute when corn is short.

The onaka or river-garden

241 In August a woman plants her *onaka*, near a stream in the alluvial soil, or in some river bed. Here she plants corn which will be ready for eating during the January period of food shortage, as well as cabbage and other vegetables.

Organisation of labour

[462] Formerly men did the heavier work of clearing new fields, although, as has been noted above, since the introduction of wage labour much of the work is left to the women. Men may also have their own fields, the produce of which is sold to provide ready cash to clothe the family, pay taxes etc. The women's fields are intended to feed the family. Children help their parents in the fields, but also have their own plots. Gardens are made by each household, i.e. by each wife where there are a number of wives. Neighbours often co-operate during the harvesting [476] period, after which beer is supplied by the owner of the field which has been harvested.(2)

HUNTING(3)

796 Most men and boys hunt, and women and children may help in burning
224 the grass and driving the game during the annual communal fire-hunts.
[463] But the professional hunter or *ukongo* is a recognised specialist, qualified by specific training and dependent on his knowledge of hunting magic
[868] and ritual for his success. A boy becomes a *ukongo* by an apprenticeship of about two years to an older hunter. This period culminates in a ceremony of inauguration, which may be attended by all the villagers but at which only the professional hunters dance. Several *ukongo* provide game, which is cooked for the feast; the dancing commences but the novice remains still and silent until he feels the "spirit of the head"; he then rises and distributes game to the villagers. Blood from the animals killed is sprinkled over his weapons, which have been made by the *ukongo* who has trained him. From now on his daily life is subject to certain ritual prohibitions: he must not sleep with his wife on the night before going on a hunt, special food and cooking-pots must be used for him, etc.

409 A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows,

(1) There is no information concerning the length of the farming-cycle.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) See Hambly, *Bantu Studies*, 1934, and *Ovimbundu*, 1934, pp.140-5; Cushman, 1944, pp.113-20.

A professional hunter usually works alone, using bows and arrows, clubs, spears, and several kinds of trap.(1) Nets and poison are not used. Every hunter makes his own arrow-shafts and feathers; the points are made by a blacksmith. On the night before leaving for a hunt, the *ukongo* calls in his fellow hunters to share a ceremony which includes dancing and the re-anointing of the weapons with beer and palm-oil.

Communal hunts usually take place in June-July, in the middle of the dry season, when large tracts of land are covered with grass ten or more feet high. The day for the hunt is set by the village headman; spears and arrows are prepared and, when the word is given, a party of about 30 men and boys move off to the assigned area of tall grass. A ring is formed round about two square miles of land, the hunters standing just within sight of each other. The grass is trodden down, fires started, and the animals killed as they rush from the flames. Antelope of many kinds, snakes, foxes, wolves, hyenas, mice and rabbits and occasionally leopards are killed in this way.

FISHING

In the Kunene and some of the other larger rivers fish are large and plentiful, and men go on communal fishing expeditions, and return with fish to sell.(2) Men usually fish with bark lines, women use basket-traps(3) and poisons. Poison is used, usually in the dry season, when the rivers are shallow. Both men and women use nets, and sometimes a fish-weir or *olunja* may be employed; this has an opening in the middle, in the lower side of which is placed a basket-trap. At the coast and along the Kwanza river dug-out canoes, about 20-30 feet long, are sometimes used for fishing.(4)

DOMESTIC ANIMALS

The principal domestic animals are the cow (*onjindi*), ox (*ongombe*, which is also the generic name for cattle), bull (*onui*), sheep (*omene*), goat (*ohombo*), pig (*ongulu*), dog (*ombua*), and chicken (*osanji*).(5) The only transport animal is the ox, used both for riding and for drawing carts.(6)

Cattle are a measure of wealth, but few families own large herds. Childs lists the domestic animals in a typical village of 196 inhabitants as: 9 head of cattle, 13 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs, and about 100 chickens. Cattle are used for paying fines and debts, for funeral feasts, and for marriage payments. Cows are not usually milked, and cattle are killed for food only when they are aged or injured, or occasionally during the June-July period of food shortage. Treated hides are used to cover stools, and for making pouches and corn-bags.(7)

The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry

(1) Some hunters have guns, but the use of gunpowder is restricted by the Portuguese.
(2) Cashman, op.cit., p.143.
(3) See Cashman, loc.cit. for a brief description of the basket-trap.
(4) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.145.
(5) Ibid., pp.152-6.
(6) Childs, personal communication. Cf. Hambly, op.cit., p.152.
(7) Hambly, op.cit., p.153.

233 The cattle herd obtains most of its food by grazing, but in the dry season the grass withers. Childs states[1] that "Herding has been a [609] function of the sister's son, and even now there is a reluctance on the part of the boys to herd for their fathers."

235 462 [844] Chickens are owned and looked after by both men and women, but other animals only by men. Boys may have small stock of their own, and a boy's economic independence most frequently begins with his owning a chicken.

231 Hambly states that goats are more common than any other animal, and that every family has one or more. These animals are not fed or watered, but are allowed to wander to find their own sustenance. Goats are not milked. Young males are castrated. The goat is frequently used in sacrifices. Sheep also are allowed to find their own food; the males are not castrated. Pigs are cared for comparatively carefully, receiving water and a daily supply of sweet potatoes and their leaves, together with some corn. Male pigs are castrated.[2]

APICULTURE[3]

[439] Beeswax was an important item of trade in the caravan days, and is still sold to Portuguese traders' stores, where it is massed into large rectangular cakes for export. Honey is eaten alone or with manioc, and [262] a fermented beer called *ochasa* is made by adding honey to corn-beer. [273] Fibre strainers are used for cleaning the wax, and large shallow baskets [252] are employed for drying the honey in the sun.

Large cylindrical hives, which are private property, are placed high in the trees. These are made by removing a cylinder of bark and lashing the halves together with strands of bark, forming a hive which has a diameter of one foot.

In Elende honey is removed from the hives during the months of August and December. One man ascends the tree in order to lower the hive with a long rope of bark or plaited fibre, while beneath the tree men are prepared to take the hive, which is opened over a smoky fire.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

326 782 *Smithing.* The profession of blacksmith or *ocivinda* is an important one, and, like hunting and divining, is sacred and is entered with special ritual. Often, but not always, these three professions are passed on by inheritance. For smithing two years' apprenticeship to a member of the profession is necessary, and is usually entered upon at the age of eighteen. At the end of this period the master examines his pupil, and makes tools for him, especially the heavy hammer or *onjundo* which is regarded as symbolic of his craft. For the inauguration ceremony the boy provides four chickens (2 male, 2 female), a dog, and a goat; the blood of these animals is sprinkled on his tools, and their flesh is eaten at a feast [553] attended by the villagers. Throughout the procedure the boy remains standing on the small anvil. Finally he is asked to choose his professional name; he then steps down from the anvil a qualified blacksmith.

(1) Childs, 1949, p.109. (2) Hambly, op.cit., p.154.
(3) Hambly, (4) 1934.

Formerly it was believed that a smith owed his skill to the help of the spirit of a person whom he had killed, and wooden effigies of this person were kept by the smith.(1) 326 782

The principal products of a blacksmith's forge are axe-heads, hoe blades,(2) tools for mat-making, arrowheads, knives, and brass bracelets. Iron, which is fairly plentiful, was formerly smelted over charcoal fires.(3) Today smiths use scrap iron. 325 412

Pottery

Pot-making is a part of women's work among the Ovimbundu. A wheel is not used. Clay is mixed with a silicate, usually gravel, rolled out in long ropes, and the pot built by the coiling process.(4) Pots are ornamented when wet by making deep incisions with a piece of gourd; they are then sun-dried, and fired in a kiln of dry grass. Pots are used as water-containers, as cooking vessels and as vessels for storing corn and beans, and, when made in a very large size, for brewing beer.(5) 323 [462]

No ritual attaches to pot-making, except at the opening of a new clay-pit, when, in the presence of both men and women from the village, the medicine-man sacrifices a chicken over the open pit.(6) [782]

Weaving and Spinning

Looms have not been used among the Ovimbundu since they have been a people, although progenitors of the kingly families who came from the Bangala or Congo groups may have done weaving. Trade cloth has been known and used by the Ovimbundu for nearly 300 years.(7) Skins have been used in remote areas; Hambly when he mentions bark-cloth as being worn by the Ovimbundu is probably referring to the Ngangela. Spun cotton, however, is used for repairs, and there is a cotton plant in most gardens. Spinning is done always by men.(8) 286 439 [281] [287] [283] 462

Basketry

All girls learn to make baskets, although some become more proficient than others. Knowledge of basket-making implies also an understanding of dyeing, since coloured strands of grass are interwoven to make geometric patterns.(9) Baskets, and also basket-trays, are usually made by the coiling process.(10) 285 462 [382]

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, pp.158-60. The ceremony was described from Njongolo village in Elende.
(2) See Cushman, 1944, pp.140-1.
(3) For details of the blacksmith's forge and tools, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.160-1; Cushman, 1944, pp.139, 140, 145-6.
(4) See Hambly, op.cit. Plates XXXIII and XXXIV, and Childs, 1949, Plate VIII.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.168; Cushman, op.cit., pp.144-5.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.169.
(7) Childs, personal communication. See also Childs, 1949, p.171, note 1.
(8) See Hambly, p.177, and Cushman, 1944, p.136.
(9) Red, yellow, black, and brown dyes are used. For a description of the process, see Hambly, op.cit., pp.170-1.
(10) See Hambly, op.cit., p.171, and Cushman, op.cit., pp.141-2 for details of basket-making. Also for illustrations Hambly, op.cit. and Childs, 1949.

Mat-making

462 285 [412] The making of mats is a specialised craft for men. Generally elderly men are the mat-makers. Two tools are used, a borer and a needle, both products of the blacksmith's forge. Hambly[1] describes the making of reed sleeping mats, large mats used for partitions, and string bags. There are four distinct types of mats, each of which has its specialist.[2]

Leather-work

282 Leather pouches worn on a broad leather belt are part of the essential equipment of the hunter. The pouch is square, rectangular, or semi-cylindrical in shape, and may be decorated with cross-shaped patterns, or brass-headed nails used for decorative effect. Hide is also used for the seats of four-legged wooden stools. Hides are crudely dressed: they are soaked, the inner surface rubbed with ashes, the hair scraped away, and the hide pegged out.[3]

Wood-carving

323 [463] Wood-carving, which is men's work, includes the following specialisations: doors, windows and their frames; coffins; beds, tables and chairs; mortars, pestles, grinding-handles, and handles for various iron implements; stools, household utensils, carved images etc.; drums and other musical instruments; canoes (dug-outs and coracles).[4] Illustrations are given by Hambly.[5]

TRADE

438 484 791 [482] Caravan trade is now confined to short journeys when corn, beans and beeswax are carried by men and women porters to the traders' stores. Formerly however it was an important feature of tribal life. Each caravan had its professional leader, and was accompanied by a diviner or medicine-man. Before a caravan started out, a ceremony was performed at which the principal performers were the village headman and the medicine-man. The head of the former headman was brought from its box, sewn in oxhide; blood from a sacrificed animal was sprinkled on the head, and invocation was made to the deceased by the village headman, asking for good fortune for the journey.[6]

438 436 Today the Ovimbundu exchange products among themselves both by barter and the use of Portuguese money,[7] but there are no large markets except in the towns.

[439] 438 The "trade-agreements" between the Ovimbundu kingdoms and between the Ovimbundu and other tribes have been mentioned above.[8] Accompanying these, regional industrial and commercial specialisations within Ovimbundu country developed. Thus in the middle of the last century

(1) Hambly, op.cit., pp.169-70.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.109.
(3) Hambly, op.cit., p.176.
(4) Childs, op.cit., p.110.
(5) Op.cit., Plates XIII to XXII.
(6) Hambly, op.cit., p.156.
(7) For details of Ovimbundu units of measurement see Hambly, op.cit., p.157.
(8) p.9.

there was a great metal industry in Viye, where hoes were made for trade with the interior; later the wholesale manufacture of hoes was taken over by Ndulu, where there are the best and most easily accessible deposits of iron. In exchange for hoes they received palm-oil or cattle from other regions, or salt, rum, or goods from the coast. Other regional specialisations were :- Kasongi and the Sele country for palm-oil, Cikuma for beeswax, cattle from Ngalangi, Kalukembe, and, further south, corn-meal from Ciyaka, Civula and Bailundu.(1)

SOCIAL ORGANISATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE

KINSHIP AND DESCENT

The Ovimbundu appear to have a system of double descent which has not yet been fully reported and analysed, and whose nature is not very clear from existing accounts. The following outline is based on information given by Childs,(2) who unfortunately details the functions but not the composition of the kin groups concerned. In a review(3) of Childs' book, Barnes has formulated a descent system which would be congruent with Childs' description, and his suggestions are outlined here.

The epata

Childs translates *epata* as "blood relatives", and his use of the term suggests that it may have either a general or a limited sense. Thus he writes (p.42): "Nearly all of the villagers belong to the same *epata* or extended family, which includes both lines of descent. Most of them belong to the father's family *(oluse)*, and the mother's family *(oluina)* may also be represented." And, in another context, (p.44): "When an Ocimbundu speaks of his *epata* (family) in the sense of a large and widespread organization with a recognized head....it is generally his *oluina* [mother's family] to which he refers."

The oluse and the oluina

Every Ocimbundu belongs in the first instance to two distinct kin groupings: the *oluse*, to whom he is related through his father, and the *oluina* to whom he is related through his mother. Uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, but to the male and female side respectively, according to sex. (see below.) A difficulty has arisen because both Hambly(4) and Childs appear to regard *both groups* as bilateral. Hambly states explicitly that the *oluse*, or *epata lia tate* (family of my father) includes *all* relatives on the father's side, and the *oluina* or *epata lia nai* (family of my mother) *all* relatives on the mother's side. Childs writes (p.45) "Bearing in mind *their bilateral nature* ..... the functions of [the *oluse* and the *oluina*] may be summarised...". But from his summary it is obvious that the *oluse* and the *oluina* cannot be bilateral groups, neither can they have parallel descent systems of any kind. Marriage is patrilocal, and the *oluse* forms a local unit while the *oluina* is

(1) Childs, 1949, p.205.
(2) 1949, pp.42-6.
(3) Man, September 1950, p.127.
(4) Op.cit., pp.191-2.

611 613 dispersed. Both groups have ritual leaders, whose offices are quite distinct. Barnes' suggestion[1] is that the two groups must be father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, with the qualification mentioned below.

613 622 [428] The *oluse* consists of a large number of village groups, some of which recognise mutual relationship,[2] but with no recognised head (other than the village headmen) except in the case of the royal families. Land is owned by the *oluse* and passed on within it from father to son, or from elder to younger brother. Succession to village or tribal office, from village headman to king, descends in the same way.[3] Ritual leadership within the *oluse* lies with the village headman, who is in charge of the [346] spirit-hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the village (or of the nuclear *oluse* within the village), and who officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals.

613 428 604 [592] [588] The *oluina*, on the other hand, is a dispersed and apparently larger group, whose members live with their various paternal lines of descent. The size of the *oluina* is unknown; Childs merely refers to it as a "large and widespread organization, with a recognized head". The office of head of the *oluina (ukulu wepata)* descends from mother's brother to sister's son. Negotiable and moveable property, including cattle and trade goods, is owned by the *oluina* and inherited by the sister's son. Formerly the mother's elder brother had great powers over his sister's sons, and was even able to pawn them or sell them into slavery, to meet his own debts. The patrilocal household is usually responsible for training children, especially during their early years, but they are frequently sent to the *oluina* (i.e. to the mother's brother) for at least a part of their education. At death or divorce of parents, children go to the *oluina*.

413 782 The head *(ukulu wepata)* of the *oluina* is usually both the legal and spiritual head of the group, although today the two functions are often divided. He is in charge of the spirit hut *(etambo)* of the guardian spirit of the *oluina* (of whom there may be more than one, and of whom he becomes one after death). He leads the *oluina* in propitiatory rituals carried out in case of illness, death, or other misfortunes within the group, or in prayers made for desired economic advantages. (Apparently no regular rituals are carried out by the *oluina*.) The *ukulu wepata* may or may not be at the same time a village headman; if he is, he will be priest of two lines and have charge of two spirit huts; if he is not, there may be two (or more) priests in the village, each in charge of the spirit-hut of his *oluse* or *oluina*.

The onĩlĩ yohonji and the onĩlĩ yohumba

613 602 582 The *oluse* and the *oluina* are both divided into male and female "sides": the *onĩlĩ yohonji* (the side of the bow) and the *onĩlĩ yohumba* (the side of the basket). It has been noted above that uterine brothers and sisters belong to the same *oluse* and *oluina*, but to the male or female side in each, according to sex. The composition of these "sides" is

(1) Loc.cit.
(2) If some villages within the *oluse* cannot trace mutual relationship, the *oluse* should perhaps be called a patri-clan rather than a patrilineage.
(3) But see below, p.29.

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however not at all clear. They seem to group simply all the male members and all the female members of the *oluse* and of the *olui*na; but this conflicts with the information given on marriage.(1) A man may marry into the male side of his mother's kin or into the female side of his father's kin. Hence there must be some women in the male side, and, presumably, some men in the female side. A man cannot marry a parallel cousin, but he may marry:

(a) a father's sister. She presumably belongs to the female side of the *oluse*, which presents no difficulty.

(b) a sister's daughter. She appears to belong to the female side of ego's mother's kin, while a man should marry into the male side of his mother's kin.

(c) a female cross-cousin. If the *oluse* and the *olui*na were merely father's patrilineage and mother's matrilineage, as has been suggested, cross-cousins are excluded from both groups. In a footnote,(2) however, Childs seems to imply that mother's brother's daughter belongs to ego's mother's kin. Barnes therefore suggests that children of men of the matrilineage may be included in the *olui*na, falling into the male side irrespective of sex, and similarly the *oluse* may include in the female side all the children of women of the patrilineage. By this hypothesis:

(a) a sister's daughter would fall into the female side of ego's *oluse*.

(b) a mother's brother's daughter would fall into the male side of ego's *olui*na.

(c) a father's sister's daughter would fall into the female side of the *oluse*.

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The descent system: summary

The descent system suggested may then be summarised thus:

(1) *oluse* (father's kin)

(a) *ondlê yohanji* (male side): all men in the patrilineage.

(b) *ondlê yohamba* (female side): all women in the patrilineage, and all sons and daughters of women in the patrilineage.

(2) *olui*na (mother's kin)

(a) *ondlê yohamba* (female side): all women in the matrilineage.

(b) *ondlê yohanji* (male side): all men in matrilineage, and all sons and daughters of all men in the matrilineage.

According to this hypothesis every person belongs to four distinct groups. A man must belong not only to the male side of the two groups centred in the father's patrilineage and the mother's matrilineage, but also to the male side of his father's matrilineal group and to the female side of his mother's patrilineal group. There are still only two systems

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.53. (2) P.53, fn.3.

611 of groups, but a man belongs to two groups within each system. Similar
613 membership is required for a woman. A man shares with all his children
602 his membership of the male side of his mother's matrilineal group, and shares with his sons membership of the male side of his father's patrilineal group. His daughters belong to his father's patrilineal group but to its female side. He does not transmit to his children membership of his father's matrilineal group or his mother's patrilineal group.(1) This is illustrated by the diagram on page 21.

601 *Kinship terminology*

Patterns of behaviour between all blood relatives find their prototypes in the household. The following list of kinship terms is selected from the more detailed list given by Childs.(2)

Term		*Reciprocal*
mai	mother, mother's sister, etc.	*wolonge*
tate	father, father's brother, etc.	*wolonge*
tatekoi	("female father") father's sister	*ocimumbo conge*
mumu	mother's brother	*ocimumbo conge*
hunongo	elder brother or sister, and male or female parallel cousin, if older than ego	*nanjonge*
kota	eldest brother (of family or household)	*nanjonge*
(epolume	male or female cross-cousin	*epolume*, *upolume*, or *cepua*
(upolume		
(cepua		
mukoi	sister or female parallel cousin (M.S.)(3)	*mume*
mbuale	" " " " (W.S.)	*mbuale*
nakulu	grandmother, grandparents' sister	*onekulu yonge*
sekulu	grandfather, grandparents' brother	*onekulu yonge*

Note: (a) There is no word used exclusively for "brother" by a man, although a woman may use *mume* in this sense. *Hunongo* and *nanjonge* are used by either men or women for elder or younger brothers or sisters.

(b) *nakulu* and *sekulu* are sometimes used interchangeably for persons of either sex.

MARRIAGE

582 *Marriage within the kin group*

The most desirable marriage is marriage within the circle of kin, i.e. (as noted above) into the male line of the *olume* or the female line of the *olume*. (There appears to be a preference for marriage within the *olume*.(4)) One may not marry one classed as brother, sister, father, mother, grandparent, child or grandchild, for such a union would involve

(1) This paragraph is largely quoted from Barnes, loc.cit.
(2) pp.47-9.
(3) M.S. = man speaking, W.S. = woman speaking.
(4) Childs, op.cit., p.53, note 3.

UMBUNDU KINSHIP TERMINOLOGY

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EGOS 4 KIN GROUPS. 1.—— - Chase, M - Male side. F - female side.
2.— — - Chains, M - Male side, F - female side. 3 — — Mothers paternal kin. 4 ---- fathers maternal kin. (Male and female sides for 3 & 4 not shown)

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582 incest *(oku ndo)*. But one may marry relatives of one's own age-level who belong to classes other than those mentioned, i.e. cross-cousins and, on other age-levels, father's sister or sister's daughter. It is said that formerly marriage never took place except between persons who could trace relationship in this way. Today this principle is very liberal in its application.(1) (It would be interesting to have estimates of the number of men who do marry first degree cross-cousins, father's sisters, or sister's daughters, as distinct from classificatory relatives of these classes, and the number who marry outside the olusa or olualua.)

583 Marriage was formerly arranged by the mother's brother (i.e. by the olualua), but today there is a tendency for fathers to arrange their daughters' marriages and to receive their marriage payment. (And also, occasionally, to assist their sons in providing marriage payment.)(2) *Vlombo*, or marriage payment, was formerly paid in cattle, blankets etc.(3) Today it is usually paid in cash, the amount being determined by the status of the bride.(4)

Polygyny

621 585 In the ample village (Ngendo, Kasongi chiefdom) described by Childs, of a total of 48 households,

(a) 10 households were polygynous; of these 9 contained only 2 wives or concubines, and the tenth, that of the headman, contained four wives and one concubine,

(b) 27 households were monogynous, and 3 more were occupied by widowers, all formerly monogynous. (The remaining households were occupied by 7 widows and one young unmarried man.)

Childs notes that the proportion of polygynous households in Kasongi chiefdom is probably higher than in other parts of Ovimbundu country for two reasons: the comparatively low marriage-payment in Kasongi as compared with other areas, and the proximity of Kasongi to Esele country, which has long been a source of supply for slave concubines. (Of the 10 polygynous households in Ngendo 5 contained at least 1 Esele concubine.)(5)

Avoidance between in-laws

602 Mutual respect *(omumbilo)* between the two kin groups involved is considered a necessary basis for a successful marriage, and is the reason given for the various avoidances *(oku liyuvutilo)* enjoined upon the principals and their respective relatives. These avoidances may be summarised:-

593 (a) A husband and wife must avoid using each other's names.

602 (b) The term ndondombo is used for parents-in-law of either sex, and reciprocally for sons-in-law or daughters-in-law. The term is extended to all those whom one's spouse calls "mother", "father" or "child" (Childs, p.52) and apparently also to those whom one's spouse calls sanu, tatekoi or

(1) Childs, p.34.
(2) Panin, 1945.
(3) Cashmore, 1944, p.45.
(4) Childs, personal communication.
(5) Childs, page 30.

608 ozisamba (since Childe states (p.55) that it includes every relative of the generation of the spouse's parents.) Ndotemba must avoid: (i) speaking each other's names. This may be accomplished by using the names compounded from those of children (thus Nakambotio and Sakambotio are the father and mother of Kambotio) or by using the terms which one's spouse uses, i.e. mai, tate, amma etc. (ii) seeing each other, if they are of opposite sex; if it is necessary to converse, it must be done out of sight, or with gaze averted. (iii) eating with each other. (This applies only to regular meals and not to casual refreshment.)

607 (c) The term mwao is used reciprocally for all the spouse's relatives of one's own generation, including those classed as "sister", "brother" and "cross-cousin". Between the mwao the only avoidance enjoined is that they may not eat regular meals in each other's presence; otherwise they are on "free and easy" terms".

"Avoidance of meeting ... is especially difficult for the bride who comes to live in a village of her husband's people, a large proportion of the men of which may be ndotemba to her. The prohibition may be lifted by .. a simple ceremony, in which each rubs a little oil on the other ... Avoidance of eating in each other's presence may be done away with after some months by sacrificing a chicken and feeding it ceremonially .. to the ndotemba or mwao ... It is especially important that the ceremonies be carried through with respect *(ezumbilo)*."(1)

A note on the kinship system

613 421 178 There is a tendency today for the claims of the clans, the land-owning group, to supplant those of the property-owning clains; one important reason for this is the change from tribe to agriculture as the most important economic activity. With European influence also conflicts have arisen over rights to children. Childe states(2) that the bilineal kinship system has been a factor leading to social stability, especially stability of marriage, but he does not elaborate this statement.

LOCAL GROUPS(3)

572 595 The "household", consisting of a man, his wife or wives and children, and such other related or unrelated dependants as may be attached to this basic group, is the basis of the village. The word enjo (house) may be used for this group, i.e. to include the various houses which a man may have established by marriage, or it may be used for the house of any one of his wives. Each wife has her own hut, granary, chickens, and fields for her children and herself, and the husband has no house of his own unless he is village headman or the head of an elaine, in which case he has a spirit-hut *(etemba)* in which he may sometimes pass the night. Sons [591] when they marry form their own households, usually in their father's village. The size of the household varies greatly according to wealth and [554] status. Some recent kings have had as many as 12 wives. But it has been noted above that, in Childe' typical village, out of 49 households only 10

(1) Childe, p.52.
(2) Ibid., p.56; see also ibid. pp.73, 81, 89 etc.
(3) This section is based on Childe, Ibid, pp.55-61.

were polygynous and only one of these contain more than two wives.(1)

The village or tabe (plural ovotabe) may consist of from 5 to 500 such households, the heads of which are usually related agnatically to each other. Most, but not all, of the larger villages are olombolo (villages of chiefs or sub-chiefs). These are said to have had formerly as many as 5,000 inhabitants,(2) but today few have as many as 3,000, and there is a general tendency towards smaller villages and even isolated households.(3) There are in general two quite different types of Umbundu village according to the terrain on which they are built. Those on the plains, where there is room to spread out, tend towards a circular shape, with the ocilo and onjango (see below) near the centre. The various sections of the village may appear as quarters of a single whole, or they may be spread out haphazardly. Mountain villages(4) may have houses built on ledges almost one on top of the other. Here there is often no room or no suitable soil within the palisades for gardens or for the dancing-floor (ocilo), which are found outside the palisade. Different sections of the village tend to string themselves out horizontally along the mountain-side, or to find successive ledges.

The typical village of Ngundo described by Childs, in Kasongi chiefdom, otumbo (sub-chiefdom) of Ekonga, is of an intermediate type, built on a slope. Ngundo has 796 inhabitants, of whom 42 are men, 60 are women, and 94 children. The village is divided into four smaller sections or wards (ovitumbo pl.), of which the largest, that of the village headman (sekulu) has 327 inhabitants, while the other three have 19, 13 and 37 inhabitants respectively. The word tabe (village) may also be used for either of the two larger sections by themselves. Each section has its own elder, but the dancing-floor (ocilo), which is the centre of village life, is in the headman's section. The ocilo is primarily a place for recreation, but religious functions also are held in it, and formal cases tried. Formerly most villages had a second communal building, the onjango or "Men's Club House"(5) whose importance was almost as great as that of the ocilo. Here all the men, youths and boys gathered for the evening meal, and here guests were entertained, lesser judicial cases settled, and the day's work and gossip discussed, while young boys, sitting in the background, gained much of their knowledge of tribal history and custom.(6) Today the onjango exists and maintains its former function chiefly in parts of Ngalangi, Viye and possibly Mbalo. It does not exist in Childs' typical village, where the "Men's Club" holds only occasional meetings on the ruche behind the headman's house, and where the common evening meal no longer takes place. The reasons suggested for the disappearance of the onjango is lack of leisure owing to demands for road work (in the immediate vicinity of Ngundo), for contract labour, involving absences of from six months to a year,(7) and the difficulty of securing tax-money.

(1) And polygyny is thought to be more frequent here than in other areas. See above, p.22.
(2) According to Wagner, 1951.
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.22, fn.1. Childs does not suggest any reasons for this tendency.
(4) Formerly many villages were built on mountains for defence, and capital villages of this type may still be seen.
(5) The "Men's Club" seems to be simply a gathering of all the adult men (and possibly also the juveniles) of the village.
(6) Childs, op.cit.; Cashmore, 1944; Baptist, (2) 1954.
(7) Most of the labour on the Benguella Railway is Umbundu, and many Ovimbundu travel to the Union of South Africa for work. (Childs, op.cit., p.18, ff.nt.)

Ngundo is surrounded by a stick palisade except on that side of the headman's household which is adjacent to the rocks used as a club-house. The village itself (and each section) is divided up into compounds, each of which contains one to three houses,[1] and palisades divide one compound from the next; between are paths leading to the ocile and out of the village. Small gardens for tobacco, maize and beans are within the compounds, and the larger fields lie outside the village at from thirty minutes' to an hour's walk. In the headman's section of Ngundo there are 25 households containing 32 houses in all. Each house has its own granary *(ocilo)* and a small chicken-coop built on stilts, and of all the houses only six have separate kitchens *(ocina)*. Most households had separate pens for pigs, goats and sheep for the night,[2] and at one side of the headman's compound there is a common corral for the nine cattle owned by the section. Only the headman had a spirit-hut *(etumbo)*, used also as a storehouse, for entertaining his guests, and for his own use should he wish to sleep apart from his wives.

Chiefs' villages or olombolo (singular ombolo) are often surrounded by a belt of tall trees.[3] The chief's compound (the *lombo*) is larger than those of other villagers, and, according to Hambly,[4] usually contains: the chief's house, which always has a separate sleeping-room; a house and a kitchen for each of his wives; a tomb for the burial of the chief and his wives; a house of meditation for the chief, and pens for pigs and chickens.

Umbundu houses are usually circular, but sometimes rectangular, and made of wattle and daub, with thatched roofs. Sometimes huts are divided by matting into a living-room and a sleeping-room. Cooking is often done in the house itself, but sometimes a separate hut is built as a kitchen.[5]

The *ombanje* (the Men's Club House) consists of a cone-shaped roof set on stout hardwood poles instead of a wall, and left open so that those for whom there may be no place inside may still see and hear what takes place within.[6]

Villages are moved when fields are exhausted and others are not available nearby[7] or, more often, when there has been illness or death in the village, which implies that some action displeasing to the spirits has been committed. (No information is available concerning the usual length of life of a village.) When the new site is chosen, the headman's fire in the old village is extinguished, and a procession starts, led by a boy carrying the sacred horn *(olonji)* of each succedent who is now a guardian spirit of the family (i.e. the clans), and a girl carrying the sacred chest *(ocitwenga)* containing the relics *(ocitye)* and the balls of iguana skin.[8] On arriving at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the

(1) In this section there were 15 goats, 20 sheep, 100 pigs and about 200 chickens. (Childs, *op.cit.*, p.31) (2) Ibid.

(3) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.208 *et.al.* It was a custom of the Nyangelo peoples to plant trees round the village and dedicate them to deceased chiefs. (See McCulloch 1950, p.68.) There is no evidence that the trees surrounding Umbundu villages have any ritual significance, although the custom may have been taken over from the conquered Nyangelo peoples.

(4) *Op.cit.*, p.208. (5) Ibid., p.20

(6) Childs, personal communication.

(7) Due often to European settlement. (8) See below, p.47.

Continuing at the site the boy and girl cut and plant the first pole, which is to be a part of the new etambo (spirit hut). The boy and girl must take part ceremonially in each operation of building the hut, and when it is built they ignite the new fire. A hen and a cock are killed, cooked on the new fire, and eaten inside the etambo by all who have taken part in building it. The headman and his wife must remain on the new site to keep the fire alight; other villagers may commute from the old village or erect temporary grass shelters on the new site. Houses are built by the occupants themselves, although men may give each other mutual help, for which there is a gift of food and beer. The ombanje is usually built by the communal labour of all boys and men, and on its completion a simple ritual is performed to promote harmony within and to welcome the spirits, who are believed to sleep in the ombanje and to take part in all discussions within it.(1)

776 346 361 342 344 [477C] [782]

The village group: composition

Childs describes the relationship of the villagers of Ngendo to each other as typical of Umbundu country. Most of the heads of households are related agnatically to their respective section-heads (who are presumably also related agnatically to each other, since the village is based on the clan group); Childs does not however discuss the relation of section heads to each other or to the village headman. He gives a table in which the householders are divided into six categories according to their relationship to their various section-heads:

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1.	Patrynal relatives of section head:	Section A (headman's)	21
		" B	8
		" C	6
			35
2.	Maternal relatives of section head:	Section B	4
		" C	2
			6
3.	Sisters' sons (or daughters)(2)	Section B	4
		" C	1
			5
4.	Relatives by marriage	Section A	3
		" B	2
			5
5.	Relationship not definitely known	Section B	2
6.	Former slaves	Section A	1
		" B	1
			2

621 601

(1) This section is based on Childs, 1949, pp.37-9.
(2) They could, of course, have been included as maternal relatives and paternal relatives, since they belong both to the clans and to the clubs.

621 The total number of households is 44, or 48 including those of the four
592 section heads. It should be noted that there is a discrepancy in Child's
114 figures (apart from an obvious misprint):(1) in another context he writes that section B contains only 12 houses (not even *households*), while from this table it would appear that section B has 15 household heads, including that of the section head; and section C is said to have 6 households, while only 4 (again counting the section head) are accounted for in this table.

591 Childs states(2) that the incidence of patrilocal marriage in Ngendo
114 is fairly typical of Umbundu country, but unfortunately gives little information regarding the relationship of the various spouses to each other or concerning the location of the villages from which they came. Matrilocal marriage is recognised as a possibility: of the three relatives by marriage listed above, one was a husband of a daughter of the headman, another the widow of a younger brother of the headman, who should have been inherited by a younger brother (?) or a mother's brother of the deceased, or, failing that, could have returned to her father's village. Of those listed above as sisters' children, two were widows who had come to live in the village with their mother's brothers.(3)

POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The village headman(4)

622 The village headman *(sekulu yimbo)* is also the head of the *olusa*
793 which forms the nucleus of the village group, and is related agnatically to most of the householders. He alone may speak of the village as *imbo liange* (*my* village); the heads of sections, who are also called *sekulu*(5)
782 may speak possessively only of their own sections *(ocitimbo cange)*, and other villagers speak only of "our village" *(imbo lietu)*.(6) The headman functions as both priest and legal head of the village. As priest he has in his compound the *etumbo* (spirit hut), in which the insignia of office are kept, and in which he prays to the ancestral spirits. Upon occasion he may sleep there, usually offering a prayer to the spirits when he wakes during the night. The *etumbo* may also be
[34] used as a lodging place for respected guests, or as a store-house for possessions not used every day. Childs states that he officiates at regular village worship, including agricultural festivals; Hambly adds that he may lead the people in offering sacrifices when epidemics of
613 sickness break out in the village. It has been noted above(7) that it is the function of the *olusa* head to lead such rituals when illness occurs within the *olusa*. In general the village head is responsible for
[622] matters - particularly agriculture and public health - which affect the whole village; individuals, both for protection and for help and other

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.28, line 27, where "twenty-four" should read "forty-four".
(2) On the basis of the 392 genealogies and 74 marriage-schedules which he collected. He does not, unfortunately, give examples or show how the comparison was made.
(3) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp.25-31.
(4) This section is based on Childs, op.cit., pp.36-7.
(5) It has been noted above that *sekulu* is used for all men (and some women) of the grandfather's generation.
(6) op.cit., p.281. (7) p.18.

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advancement, will go to the head of their olunga to ask for his intercession with the spirits.(1)

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As legal head of the village, the sekulu yimbo presides over both the more serious cases, which are held before the whole village on the dance-floor, and the simpler ones, which require the attendance only of those concerned, together with their respective elders, and may be taken up either in the onjango or in the headman's own courtyard. Hambly seems to suggest that all the section-heads act with the village headman as a kind of council, but does not give details. He states also that the olosekulu (sing. sekulu) of the village formerly had charge of trials for murder, theft, adultery, and arguments over land,(2) and points out that they were more active in the legal system than the chiefs.(3) This is even more true today, when the village court of justice continues to function in spite of political and administrative changes, although the offices of chiefs and to some extent of sub-chiefs have largely decayed. [177]

622 423 651 466 [463]

Other functions of the village headman include: the distribution of land to the various families when new village sites are opened;(4) the direction of the communal fire-hunts;(5) and, today, the collecting of taxes from the villagers and the direction and organisation of labour to work on the roads.(6) But however numerous the headman's official duties, he usually finds some time to attend to his own affairs, whether he is a farmer, hunter, or trader.(7)

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Succession to headmanship is usually from father to son or from elder to younger brother, "with only as much recognition of primogeniture as belongs to the general ... hierarchy of age."(8) Succession is, however, affected by the "democratic" tendencies in succession to chieftainship.(9)

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*The Chief (*ossoma or sova*)*(10)

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The Ovimbundu are grouped in 22 chiefdoms, of which half were in the past generally tributary to the more powerful chiefs.(11) At the same time each chiefdom had its separate government and could be considered as a unit in itself. Effective European occupation and direct rule have atrophied the chiefly office among the Ovimbundu, until today chiefs survive as little more than "living museum pieces".(12) Childs(13) enumerates the functions of the chiefly office as follows: [177]

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(a) *Religious.* The chief's ancestral spirits were the principal chiefdom deities, and the king was high-priest as well as the visible "vice-regent and incarnation" of the spirits.

(1) Childs, personal communication.
(2) The maternal uncle is responsible for settling disputes over property which occur within the olunga. (Hambly op.cit., p.200).
(3) Ibid. (4) Ibid.
(5) Cashmore, op.cit., p.115. (6) Ibid., p.121.
(7) Childs, op.cit., p.36. (8) Ibid., p.44.
(9) Ibid.
(10) Ossoma means chief or king. Soma is the personalized form used with the name. This the Portuguese writers have corrupted into osso or solo. (Childs, personal communication)
(11) See above, p.2.
(12) Childs, op.cit., p.30. (13) Ibid.

regent and incarnation" of the spirits. Sacrifices were made at the royal shrine or *kokokoto* ("at the skulls"), where the skulls of past chiefs were kept, in order to:-

(i) control the elements i.e. to ensure a sufficient supply of rain and avoid the dangers caused by storms; also to control fire by providing a new fire ceremonially kindled[1] from which everyone took his fire.

(ii) to ensure fertility, towards which the royal marriage had great influence. The queen's special province was agriculture and her kitchen was sanctified by human sacrifice to guarantee the national food supply. Ceremonially treated seed was distributed to be mixed with the seed of each granary.

(b) *To represent the country in its external relations*, principally to make trade agreements with other chiefs, or to make war on other peoples in order to get tribute and plunder. The war leader *(Kesongo)* has his own residence entirely separate from that of the king, whom he must not meet face to face except on certain ceremonial occasions.[2] Each king must inaugurate his reign with a war, during which or after which he must ceremonially "eat the old one" *(oku lia ekongo)* - who was usually a specially fattened slave cooked with the flesh of the principal animals commonly eaten.[3]

(c) *To dispense justice.* The chief's court or *olusenje* was the supreme court of the chiefdom. The chief had the final word in any case, but most chiefs acted according to custom.

(d) *To protect himself and the chiefdom*, the chief could use "magic" (?) which might have been accounted witchcraft or murder if practised without authority: e.g. the ritual murder of a pregnant woman, or of the children whose lives were required for building and furnishing the queen's kitchen.

(e) The chief made much use of divination in order to carry out his office. For this purpose he had his own diviner *(citue cosoma)*, who was of the blood royal; but he also consulted diviners of other regions and types.

Succession to chiefship is in the male line,[4] from father to son, elder brother to younger brother or brother's son, or sometimes to one more distantly related. The election is made by the councillors whose duty it is (?), ordinarily before the old chief's death is announced. These same councillors may depose an unpopular chief, and there have been many such deposition. This "democratic" tendency of the Ovimbundu has been noted by most writers. Childs points out that it is attested by the fact that a chief (formerly as well as today) works in his own fields, and by folk-tales which give incidental and intimate pictures of petty details in the lives of the chiefs†

(1) See above, p.26.
(2) In Bailundu he, with certain other officials, was of the stock of slaves of the state *(ovindili viosoke)*.
(3) Childs, p.21. Many early writers refer to the cannibalism of the "Jagas" or "Jakangalas" who are thought to have been the Ovimbundu chiefs. (See above, p.6, and also Locerda and Revenstein, quoted by Childs, pp.17ff.)
(4) But inheritance is said to follow a different line among chiefs from among commoners; possibly inheritance is also in the paternal line. See Childs p.18.

† See footnote 1, p. 31

lives of chiefs.(1)

The chief's council and court 642

It has been noted that there is a chiefdom council responsible for electing the chief or deposing him, and for sitting with him in law cases. The composition of this council has not been clearly described.(2)

The Sub-chief

The chiefdom(3) was made up of a number of sub-chiefdoms called *otumbu* (sing. *etumbu*); Bailundu had about 200 *otumbu*, each of which had from 3 to more than 300 villages, while a number of the larger *otumbu* were themselves made up of smaller ones. About 20 *otumbu* were ruled by members of the chiefly family, including heirs apparent or expectant, and the chief's wife (*inakulu*) had also her own sub-chiefdom.(4) Others were ruled by court officials not of royal birth, who sometimes themselves established dynasties, others again by dynasties native to the respective regions, or at least dynasties longer resident in the area than the chiefly family. Villages of sub-chiefs, like those of chiefs, are known as *olombala*. Most of the *otumbu* are still recognised, and the sub-chiefs have retained more of their old functions than have the chiefs, and have in addition been given new functions. They as well as village headmen are required to assist in assessing and collecting native tax,(5) and also in recruiting labour for government work and for contracts. In some areas they receive in return the remission of their own taxes. On the dancing floor of most of their *olombala* cases are still heard, judgments given and fines received, although such judgments are not officially recognised or allowed by the European authorities.(6) 643 631 [177] [151] [692]

LAW

Courts

Very little information is available. We are told that certain disputes, e.g. concerning inheritance, are settled within the *oluina*;(7) that in the village cases are tried by a council which apparently consists of the section-heads under the leadership of the village headman;(8) and that these village courts continue to function; that certain cases (unspecified) are still unofficially heard in the courts of the sub-chiefs; and that prior to European occupation the paramount chief's decision was final. 691 693

(1) Ibid., p.23. But chiefs were treated with respect; Hambly (1934, p.214) notes that the ancient custom was for commoners to fall on their knees when greeting a chief, and today this still applies to women and children although less often to men. (2) See Serpa Pinto, 1881, p.167.
(3) Most writers use "kingdom" and "king"; "chief" when used here without qualification refers always to the paramount chief of one of the 22 chiefdoms.
(4) Magyar, 1851, pp.389f, also quoted by Childs, op.cit., p.24.
(5) The amount of the tax levied on all males from 16 years is now Ags. 200,000 annually. As noted by Childs (p.215-6), it has been steadily increasing. Opportunities for earning are comparatively small in Angola, not now for lack of work, but because of "contract labour" required of all males in addition to taxes. Payment for "contract labour" is considerably below current wages, and it is a great hindrance to productive agricultural activities. (Childs, personal communication) (6) Childs, op.cit., pp.24-5.
(7) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.200. (8) See above, p.29.

692 567 Hambly and Childs seem to suggest that any case might be referred to the chief for his decision: "Even a slave used to have rights of appeal to the king if he were starved or beaten without cause".(1) Neither describes the composition of the courts or the mechanism of appeal.

Legal procedure

695 Childs writes rather obscurely "Cases might be settled by ordeal or by decision of the king, and there was therefore room for appeal and retrial".(2)

One kind of ordeal, the *ombulungu* or poison ordeal, is described by Hambly:(3) It was used (only?) when the accused was thought to have committed murder by poison or sorcery. (If weapons were used, the accuser, usually a relative of the deceased, had the right to kill the murderer with the same kind of weapon.) If a woman were accused in this way, her son or brother would take her place in the poison ordeal.

The complainant in a suit is called *ombile*, the defendant *ovilue*, and the witness *uvangi*. Cushman states that no evidence is ever ruled out of court, and that each witness is required to give a complete account of all his dealings with the persons concerned in the case, so that the court may know on which side he is likely to be prejudiced.(4) Hambly(5) adds that formerly a witness had to make recompense to the man about whom he had told a lie, and probably received a beating as well. According to Cushman an Umbundu court may find that both parties are to blame in a case, and may fine or penalise both according to the degree of guilt. "If the chief is not satisfied, he simply gets up and leaves the court circle. This indicates that the evidence has not been satisfactory and more must be presented."(6)

672 In the absence of the delinquent, responsibility for crime was formerly transferred to a relative. If a thief escaped, responsibility would rest with a brother, a father, or a son. The mother's brother was often held responsible for the misdeeds of his sister's children, and would be expected to pay their debts.(7)

Punishments

685 A thief was punished by a beating and a fine paid to the persons from whom he had stolen.(8) An habitual thief was sold into slavery. He might be redeemed, but only if the authorities considered his reformation complete.(9) Murder was punishable by death, although this penalty might 682 be avoided by a heavy fine paid to the relatives, usually the mother, 684 mother's brother, or sister's son of the deceased. If the victim were of the royal family, the murderer might be put to death after the payment of the fine. The punishment for women murderers was the same as for men.(10) In adultery the woman was not punished, but a man was punished in the same way as a murderer, i.e. by death or a heavy fine. (Hambly gives the fine

(1) Hambly, op.cit., p.201.
(2) 1949, p.21.
(3) op.cit., p.203.
(4) 1944, pp.38-9.
(5) op.cit., p.201.
(6) 1944, p.39.
(7) Hambly, op.cit., p.201.
(8) Ibid., p.202.
(9) Cushman, 1944, p.39.
(10) Hambly, op.cit., pp.202-3.

for murder as two oxen and two slaves; for adultery, two oxen, a pig, and a slave.) Today a man who has committed adultery sometimes takes the woman and all children under three years of age, but this is for the husband to decide. An adulterer with one of the chief's wives was castrated but not killed, and the castration might be compounded for a high fine, while he, his sisters, and the sons of his sisters would become slaves of the chief.(1) Hambly states finally that "Criminal law did not distinguish between responsibility for intentional and unintentional offences."(2)

There is no information regarding the kinds of cases tried or the punishments given in the courts of village headmen or sub-chiefs today.

INHERITANCE

It has been noted above that moveable property is inherited in the maternal line, land in the paternal line.(3) The eldest brother of the deceased's mother has the first claim and is responsible for settling disputes. He may distribute the property to the mother of the deceased, the maternal grandfather, or to a brother of the deceased, but is not compelled to do this. Women never inherit cattle or land, although the sisters of a deceased woman usually receive most of her household utensils (the rest belong to her husband). A widow goes to the house of (? marries) the eldest brother of the deceased or her own maternal uncle, or she may return to her father's village. Apparently her children accompany her, although one would expect them to go to her brother.(4)

DIVORCE

Divorce appears to be infrequent; grounds for divorce are many, but difficulties are often overcome by a compromise between the two kin groups concerned. Causes for dissatisfaction on the part of a husband include his wife's incompetence, dishonesty, physical weakness, or infidelity (in the last case today a fine from the adulterer is usually accepted and the marriage continues). Barrenness is not a ground for divorce; usually the husband takes a second wife, but the first maintains her position as head wife. Sterility in the male is sometimes suspected, in which case the husband may try another girl, with his wife's consent, or the woman another man. A woman may divorce a man if he is impotent (not sterile), or if he ill-treats her, but not because he is unfaithful. If for any of these reasons the woman returns to her family, the latter are expected to return the marriage payment, although they may wait until another suitor appears who will pay the deserted husband. Whether the initiative in divorce is taken by the woman or the man, the marriage is not annulled until a renunciatory ceremony has been carried out by the husband, the wife, and the wife's father, in the presence of the village headman. The husband receives from his wife's father a roll of tobacco and a pig, and then places leaves(5) and palm oil on his wife's back; he then slaps his wife's back saying "It is finished".

(1) Hambly, op.cit., p.203. (2) Loc.cit.
(3) See above, p.18, and Childs, 1949, p.44.
(4) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.199.
(5) The leaf used is of the *apu* tree; the same leaf is tied to the pole of the *etambo* of a new village, as a sign of divorce from the old site. (Childs, 1949, p.38; this is the only context in which Childs mentions divorce.)

586 When a woman divorces her husband to marry another man, she takes to her home all children under three years of age; other children go to the home of her parents.(1) There is no information concerning the fate of children when the man divorces his wife.

[691] Divorce cases are apparently brought before the court of the village headman only where the return of the marriage payment to the husband is long delayed or in some way unsatisfactory.(2)

LAND TENURE

423 There is virtually no information on Umbundu land usage. Childs states that land is inherited in the paternal line, i.e. by brother or son. Hambly suggests that "The right to land depends on its use and allotment by a chief (?) at the time of founding a village," and that "Rights seem to have been well defined and there was always enough room for a stranger". The meaning of neither of these statements is very clear.(3)

DOMESTIC SLAVERY

567 [672] Slaves were formerly taken in war, and, until very recently, as a result of a person's inability to pay his debts. In such a case not the debtor, but the debtor's sister's children were taken as slaves by the creditor. If the debt was paid later, the children were set free.(4) Today children instead of being sold into slavery may be expected to work for the creditor to pay off the debts of the mother's brother.(5) Childs writes "Slaves or former slaves have a status within the household or village which to the ordinary observer does not differ from that of the children: they are treated much as the children and they may carry on in all matters social and economic as though they were members of the family". He adds however that when there is a call for labour, the lot falls more often to a slave or a pawn.(6) Hambly, however, notes that formerly the master had rights of punishment including the death sentence, although an ill-treated slave might appeal to the village headman. Slave women were frequently taken as concubines, but were not lent out as prostitutes. A slave woman who married a free man would revert to her master along with her children when her husband died. All children of slaves became slaves of the master, who could dispose of the girls in marriage. If he himself married a slave girl, she would, at his death, become the property of his eldest brother and her children would go with her, although in some instances the woman and children might go to the mother's brother's son.

[727] It seems likely (although it is nowhere stated) that there was a clear distinction between slaves captured in war and slaves taken as a result of a debt; possibly the information quoted above from Hambly refers mainly to war captives.

(1) Hambly, op.cit., pp.182-3.
(2) Ibid., p.183.
(3) Hambly, op.cit., p.201. Hambly states here that the system of land distribution is described in a later section of his book, but this section merely refers back to these remarks.
(4) Bastos (1909, p.33) adds that if a father redeemed his children, the maternal uncle lost his right to sell them into slavery.
(5) Hambly, op.cit., p.205.
(6) 1949, p.42.

A man slave might become a blacksmith or a hunter, although his work was always for his master. He was also required to fight for his master in case of war.(1) 567

RELIGION AND MAGIC

Information on Umbundu religion and magic is very slight, being practically confined to a few items collected by Hambly from his Umbundu interpreter,(2) and a more coherent article by Tucker, primarily on divination.(3) 771

THE SUPREME BEING

Suku, the Supreme Being, is thought of as the creator of mountains, rivers, sky and human beings.(4) His attributes have not been described. 776

CONCEPTS OF SPIRIT(5)

The body *(etimba)* is thought of as having *omuenyo* (breath or life), and containing the *ocililemba* (spirit or soul). The *ocililemba* is visible in a person's shadow in the daytime, and during sleep it has adventures of its own, which it reports to the sleeper through dreams *(olonjoi)*. At death it leaves the body, but lingers nearby, accompanying the body to the interment, still in the form of a shadow. It then becomes an *ocilulu* (ghost), and may wander where it pleases. Sometimes it may be seen passing with superhuman swiftness through the village, uttering weird cries or calling pigs or chickens as the person used to do while alive. It chooses one of the households as a home, and indicates its wish to stay there by causing illness among the householders. The victim when he has learned the cause of his illness from the diviner places himself in a favourable condition to receive the spirit by performing a ceremony which includes going into a trance.(6) When this ceremony has been performed the *ocilulu* (ghost) becomes an *ondele*, which appears to be a generic name for ancestral (and other?) spirits. It is not clear from Tucker's description whether the relatives of the deceased always wait for this intimation of the wish of the *ocilulu* for a home, or whether the ceremonies may sometimes be performed immediately after death. Nor does she give any information regarding the relatives with whom the *ocilulu* usually chooses to live. She states that spirits of paternal ancestors are less feared than those of maternal ancestors, for while the former are usually satisfied with a hunt, a beer-drinking and a feast held in their honour, the latter are malignant and may "eat" children and occasionally adults also. 774 775 [787] [789]

The *ohamba* (sing. *ehamba*) "are the peaceful spirits of ancestors of long ago, who have already had the trance ceremony performed for them, and thus have a home and ... standing in the other world". (Tucker does not indicate how much time must pass before a spirit becomes a *ehamba*.(7)) 769

(1) Hambly, 1934, p.206.
(2) Op.cit., chap. IX.
(3) 1940.
(4) Hambly, op.cit., p.262.
(5) Based on Tucker, op.cit. unless otherwise stated.
(6) Tucker does not describe this ritual.
(7) It may be noted that among the Ngangela peoples to the east, the *ombamba* are the forms taken by ancestral spirits when they wish to harass their descendants. See McCulloch 1951, p.75.

769 They intimate their wishes to their descendants only through slight illness, usually asking for honour to be paid to them by a feast, or by some descendant carrying on their profession.

Osande is the spirit of the much-honoured founder of the family,(1) and is always beneficent, bringing good fortune and warning his descendants of danger. Hambly and Tucker agree that *Ekisi* is the same kind of 776 spirit as *Osande* (although Hambly does not give *Osande* this special mean- 769 ing). Tucker writes that *Ekisi* is a benevolent spirit who calls the villagers together at night, and gives them advice through a medium (?), whom he enters without the latter's going into the usual trance. *Kandundu* according to Tucker is an *ekisi* who holds the leading position among the [778] ancestral spirits owing to his seniority. Hambly describes a shrine to *Kandundu* at Bailundu; anyone who sees the contents of the shrine is supposed to become blind. He writes that *Kandundu* is thought of as "the spirit of dreaming who makes swellings on the body", but gives no further explanation. According to Tucker *Kandundu* is an especially powerful *ondele*, and ceremonies performed for him have many distinctive features.

224 *Huvi*, the spirit of the hunt, has his own shrine and priest in the village of the (paramount?) chief. His hut is very large, since all the 776 meat of the hunts is placed in it. In front of it dances are held, and 778 poles are decorated with skulls and other trophies of hunting. Before the door there is a carved figure of *Samemba*, the spirit who chases the game towards the hunter. A man whose ritual name is *Kapila*, and a woman called *Kuanja*(2) are in charge of the spirit-hut of *Huvi*, and make supplication to him for success in hunting. Hunters living elsewhere but in [553] an *ombala* or head village do not have persons bearing these ritual names, but their dogs are often called *Huvi*, *Samemba*, *Kapila* or *Kuanja*.

775 The most dreaded spirits are the *otulopokopoko*, who may be spirits 754 of still-born babies or foetuses, mental defectives, maltreated slaves, or persons, especially children, killed by sorcery. When a person has been found guilty of killing a child by sorcery or witchcraft, he is sentenced to "restore life" to it, which he does by substituting for it a child from his own family: if the deceased child is a girl, he must give an ox as well. The child is treated with great respect by his new family. If however the parents do not ask the sorcerer or witch for restitution, the child becomes an *okalupokopoko*, and may return to "eat" other children, at the command of the sorcerer who has killed it.

RITUAL

793 It has been noted that the village headman acts as priest for the 613 *oluse*, the group of paternally-related persons who form the basis of the village group, while the head of the *oluina* acts as priest for his dispersed, maternally-related group.(3) There is little detailed information on the religious duties of these priests. Cushman(4) describes the village headman as making public prayers each morning to Suku. Childs however points out(5) that it is more usual for the headman to spend a

(1) i.e. of either the *oluse* or the *oluina*. (Childs, personal communication)
(2) According to Childs, (1949, p.21) *Kuanja* is a hunting goddess.
(3) See above, p.28.
(4) 1944, p.51. (5) Personal communication.

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night in the *etambo* praying to or communing with ancestral spirits, when the occasion arises; Suku is regarded as too remote to receive prayers.

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While cooking, a woman may spill a little meal on the ground for the spirits; at a meal, a person may spill a little food or beer for the same purpose. A portion of the meat at a feast may likewise be sacrificed, but it is often a less desirable portion, such as the intestines.(1)

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Agricultural rituals were held before planting, at which time the headman and his wife had intercourse in their field and sacred seed from the chief's granary was distributed, a few grains to be mixed with the seed to be planted on each plot. When the maize began to ripen a few ears were sent to the chief before any were eaten.(2)

DIVINERS(3)

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The word *ocimbanda* is used both for a diviner and for a maker of medicines. To distinguish the two, the diviner may be called *ocimbanda congombo* ("of the basket"), the herbalist *ocimbanda coviti* ("of trees or sticks"). Some practitioners are both diviner and herbalist. A female diviner is called *cambula*.(4) An *ocimbanda* frequently specialises in a certain kind of case;(5) and among the members of the profession there are many degrees of proficiency. One may work only in his own village, another may be consulted on matters of concern to the whole district or chiefdom; others go on professional journeys carrying their baskets, and accumulate profits in animals and cloth. The greater the reputation of the diviner, the greater the charges he makes for his services.

The tasks of the *ocimbanda* are:-

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(a) To discover the cause of sickness, death, or any evil which has befallen the individual or the community. Sickness and death are always believed to be due either to the workings of spirits who are demanding sacrifices, or to living enemies who have malicious spirits under their control or who have bought potent charms. The diviner, after consulting the spirit who speaks in and through his basket, names the spirit who is causing the trouble and tells the victim what its demands are, or, if the enemy is a living person, indicates in a general manner from whence the trouble comes, e.g. to a woman "Your baskets are too well made; you are hated because of them", or, to a man, "This illness was found on a journey taken to collect a debt". If requested, the diviner makes a counter-charm to offset that which has caused the ill.

(b) To interpret omens and dreams.

(c) To give advice on personal problems.

(d) To dispense medicines and charms.

(e) To bring or withhold rain, or to see who is guilty of withholding it. [789]

(1) Ibid., see also Cashmore, loc.cit.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) Based on Tucker, 1960.
(4) Hambly, (3) 1934.
(5) Ibid.

787 A detailed description of the procedure of divining is given by Tucker. In brief, the basket (*ongombo*), which contains a wide variety of objects, is ritually prepared, and the diviner goes into a kind of trance which calls the spirit of the basket to him. As he starts shaking the basket, he asks it first why the clients have come to him (since they may not ask him directly), and when he has ascertained this, questions the spirit about the cause of the trouble. The chanted replies of the audience (consisting, apparently, of outsiders as well as the clients) assist him in making the divination. The divination is finally given from the juxtaposition of the objects which settle on top of the pile in the basket.(1)

Especial care is taken of the divining basket when not in use. Some diviners build a special *ombo* or spirit-hut for the basket; others keep [841] it hidden in their own house, where it may be seen only by the wife of the diviner, and only when she is not menstruating. Tucker gives a long description of the contents of the divining basket and illustrations of some of the objects.

791 At the death of a diviner, his son inherits the *ongombo*, but only if he can master the secrets of the basket and pass the tests which are given during his initiation into the profession. In addition, he must be "called" by some omen or illness which a diviner interprets as the wish of an ancestral spirit that he should become a diviner.(2) If he does not have these qualifications, the basket goes to someone who does, and the son receives no recompense. In either case, two years of training are usual for the would-be diviner, during which he is apprenticed to an established member of the profession. In this period he may learn [754] *ovihemba* (medicines); their preparation and their uses to cure or kill. In order to provide the female counterpart to the spirit of the divining basket, he might formerly invite a girl to spend the night with him. In the morning, he gave her a magically treated cloth which caused her illness and death; her spirit would then be able to assist the one he already had.

The *olombumbo* or "servants of the basket" are youths who carry the accoutrements of the *ocimbanda* and wait on him; they also provide their master with such information about the community, and during divination closely observe the clients and assist the *ocimbanda* by shouting loudly when he has made the right answer. They are also believed to have mystic powers, e.g. to see and reveal what is going on at a distance, or to go into a trance during which the spirit of the basket may speak through their lips instead of through the basket. Tucker gives no information concerning the identity of these boys; possibly they are the diviner's apprentices, although she does not suggest this.

787 "The Ovimbundu refer all communications from the spirit world, whether by omen, portent or illness, to an *ocimbanda*....The requisite behaviour is determined according to the answer given by the combination of pieces in the *ongombo* [divining basket], which is thus the key to the

(1) The contents of the basket and the ritual which surround it appear to be almost identical with the practice of the eastern neighbours of the Ovimbundu described in another section of the Survey. (McCulloch, 1951, pp.81-2)
(2) It is not very clear whether the spirit of the basket is that of its former owner, or whether it is some non-ancestral spirit.

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hole supernatural world... The divining basket is the concrete medium through which the spirits reveal their will to their descendants on earth, and warn them of dangers, human or supernatural".(1)

SORCERERS AND WITCHES

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Sorcerers and witches are not clearly distinguished. Both are called olonganga, and have powers over one or more malignant spirits whom they can send anywhere to kill, steal, or torment. These "familiar spirits" are sometimes called otulo olumbo, and are held responsible for all mysterious disappearances of maize, beans and other possessions, as well as for many illnesses and deaths. Some sorcerers are said to own small images which they send out at night. Others are said to dance naked at night at the door of the intended victim's house. When sorcery involves killing by physical means, portions of the victim's body may be used to make "medicine" or charms.(2)

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A person may be a sorcerer without knowing it, and may deny it when accused by the diviner. If he does so, he and his accuser undergo the ombulungu (poison test),(3) to discover who is in the right.(4) Concerning accusation of sorcery, Childs writes "Any marked success ... by an individual, especially when such success has been achieved by an individual alone or in partnership, but not in co-operation with a number of persons, often brings on suspicion of sorcery. Should the results of such success be distributed widely....suspicion is less likely to arise....An open accusation of sorcery (oku sunga owanga) is a very serious matter and will not often be made lightly. Such accusations are made both within and across kinship lines. Affinal relatives are quite often accused of sorcery, and suspicion frequently rests upon wives whose kinship connexions are in distant regions..." .(5) [578]

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The tendency or aptitude for sorcery is supposed to be inherited by a daughter, or a son, or a nephew from the mother, uterine or classificatory, from the mother's brother etc. It is said that older relatives take younger ones as apprentices and partners.(6) The aim of a person who consciously takes up sorcery is said usually to be economic advancement. A very common form involves the enslavement of the spirit of another person, often a child of one's own family or kin group; the victim may be killed by either physical or magical means. Childs points out that sorcery is one of the greatest internally disruptive forces within the kin group and social system of the Ovimbundu. He notes that jealousy and grudges often bring accusations from within the circle of kin, but does not describe what happens when the charges have been made and verified. Especially in view of his statement that economic, political and other forces now seem to be acting to increase the incidence of sorcery,(7) it would be interesting to have information concerning its possible connection with segmentation of lineages or village groups, or its relation to tensions between the paternal and maternal groups of relatives.

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(1) Tucker, op.cit., p.201.
(2) Childs, personal communication.
(3) The ombulungu is administered by the medicine-man, and causes sickness but not death. See Tucker, op.cit., and Hambly, (2) 1934, p.203.
(4) Tucker, op.cit.
(5) Childs, 1949, p.57.
(6) Childs, personal communication.
(7) Childs, 1949, p.58.

683 One of the commonest forms of punishment for sorcery was, and still is, banishment. Only the chief could pronounce the death penalty. Charges of sorcery are sometimes brought today to civil courts and to church courts under the guise of "poisoning".(1)

781 There are obvious gaps in the information on Umbundu religion and
776 magic e.g. on spirits other than those of ancestors; on ritual connected
171 with the ancestors; on productive and protective magic; on the work of the medicine-man as distinct from the diviner, and on the functions of the two separate offices of family priest. From existing accounts, however, Umbundu magico-religious concepts would appear to have much in common with those of the peoples to the east of the Plateau, and many of the words used for these concepts (*ngunbo, ukuku, wanga, ngonge* e.g.) are in fact the same. These peoples have been described in another section of the Survey.(2)

THE LIFE CYCLE

852 Childs' chapters on infancy, childhood, and adolescence form the
114 main part of his book, and his treatment of the subject is much more detailed and on a deeper level than information offered by other writers,(3) and should be consulted.

BIRTH

849 A woman remains in her husband's village for the birth of her children. During the first birth, she is generally assisted by older women of the village, usually relatives of the husband. No man is present unless delayed labour entails the presence of a medical practitioner, or a diviner. Difficult delivery is said to be caused by broken taboos, [845] adultery on the part of the mother, sorcery, or the woman's own refusal to give birth. There is little ceremony connected with childbirth, and a woman may give birth to her second and later children alone when she is in the fields. There is a customary lying-in period until the cord falls [846] from the navel, but this is frequently ignored today.

845 *Twins* are welcomed but are considered prodigies whose birth requires the administrations of an *ocisanda*.(4) Soon after the birth, and every month while the children are growing, the whole village takes part in a ceremony to preserve their lives. In the case of triplets, one is given to the paramount chief.(5)

553 Naming usually takes place, in the case of a first-born, on the day of its birth. Childs notes several factors:

(a) The name (*ondako*) should have been borne by a relative, whether living or dead, whose character and state of well-being are satisfactory; sometimes the child may be considered the re-incarnation of the deceased relative after whom he is named.½

(1) Childs, personal communication. (2) McCulloch, 1951, pp.73-82.
(3) Bumby, [2] 1934, pp.232-33, and Cameron, 1964.
(4) Ennis, 1941. (5) Childs, 1949, p.85.

½ [Childs, op. cit., p. 87-]

relative after whom he is named.(1)

(b) Ordinarily the baby is named by the father from his family. According to Ennis,(2) the first male child is usually named after the paternal grandfather, the first female child after the paternal grandmother; the next two or three children are named after paternal uncles and aunts, and then the mother may choose a name. Childs writes that the name may be given by the mother if the father's family has a bad record of deaths and illnesses.

(c) The name must not prejudice but assist the child's chance of survival; thus a child born after the death of several siblings may be given an insignificant name, intended to cause the spirits to overlook it, or to consider it less than human.

(d) Events or persons prominent at the birth may influence the choice. A namesake, whether intentional or not, is known as Sanda (from the Portuguese word for saint). Events at the time of birth may be summed up in a proverb, of which the key word is the name. Ennis gives numerous examples of such names.(3)

(e) The same names may belong to several families of a type, e.g. trading or farming families, or the families of paramount chiefs, who were jealous of their names and did not permit their use by commoners.

Parents take the name of their first-born: thus "Njambe" is "the mother of Njambe". During illness a person may change his name to draw away the attention of the spirits. Adolescents discard their birth names and choose new ones.(4)

Infancy

During the first six months the child sleeps with his mother and during the day is carried in a cloth on her back, and fed whenever he demands milk. If the mother has no helper, she works in the fields with the baby on her back. An older sister or other young relative may play with the infant within hearing distance of the mother.

Between six and twelve months the child is taught to sit; when he can do this he is no longer a baby *(ocana)* but an ocizombe (toddler). A child rarely walks before the age of 24 months, since he is carried and held so much.

Weaning: a child goes every day with his mother to the fields; each month he becomes fatter and heavier, but he usually continues like this until after the second birthday. When he can walk, he may be left during the day with his young nurse (elder sister, cross-cousin or other relative) and not fed until the mother returns during the afternoon. The process of weaning begins then at this stage but is usually not completed till a year or two later, unless another baby intervenes. Those who take longer than usual in weaning say, however, he frightened away from the breast.(5)

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.87.
(2) Ibid.
(3) op.cit.
(4) Childs, loc.cit.
(5) Childs, op.cit., p.88.

862 "The practice of leaving the orisambe in the village by day makes his elder sibling[1] responsible for much of his education....She herself may not be more than six or seven years old and consequently cannot be expected to 'educate' her charge very thoroughly. She interests herself in his walking and talking and he will imitate her in many things."[2]

863 General instruction in cleanliness begins at this age, although sphincter control may have begun much earlier, since the mother feels every movement made by the baby on her back.

195 After weaning the physical development of the child proceeds more slowly than that of European peoples, and Childs believes that this may be due to deficiencies in diet.[3]

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

857 From the time a child is able to walk until he is about nine years
861 old he continues seeing the same people as before, but he becomes less dependent upon the elder sister or cousin who helped him, and begins his life-long association with his age-mates. The sex-division of society starts for him at this stage: from about eight years boys begin to eat in the *enjango* with their fathers, girls continuing in the kitchen with their mothers. After about eight years the father becomes largely responsible for the education of boys, the mother for that of girls. During this period the child's education may be summarised under three heads:

869 (a) *Psychological*, chiefly fear of real or imaginary dangers. This is imparted by mother, elder siblings, and perhaps by a grandmother; there is a tendency for the teaching of fear to be done by women.[4]

867 (b) *Social*, chiefly usages of etiquette and acquaintance with the kinship structure and its requirements. A child of about eight is supposed to know his social status and all the etiquette that pertains to it. In the *enjango* the hierarchy of age is observed, honoured guests and old men being served first, and so on all down the line. With the decline of the *enjango*, there has been a great decline in the teaching of etiquette and social usage, and this naturally affects boys rather than girls.

864 Little direct sex teaching is attempted, and adults are reticent in speaking of sexual matters in the presence of children. But since children live with their parents in one-roomed houses, it is inevitable that children should sometimes observe intercourse.

868 (c) *Training in skills*: Children are taught few definite skills before the age of eight or nine, but many of their games are in imitation of adult activities.

869 From the age of six or seven years children are usually sent to spend
857 one or two years with the mother's brother. They may also be sent to the father's sister or brother for a period, and, in the case of girls, to the mother's mother. Formerly prominent families sent their children for a

(1) Either a brother or sister may act as nurse.
(2) Childs, *op.cit.*, p.95. (3) Ibid., p.97.
(4) Childs actually writes "the side of the basket" (p.100), but seems to be referring simply to female relatives.

time to the village of the paramount chief. These periods spent away from home continue into adolescence. Not only relatives, but also friends, blood-brothers and vakuenisoko (see below) exchange children in this way. 604 857

Later childhood

No definite time marks the transition from early to later childhood, but there are marked differences between the two stages. As soon as the child is physically able, he begins to assume a definite role in the community. Soon after a child gets his permanent teeth, a notch in the form of an inverted V is chipped between the two upper front incisors. Formerly the beginning of the period was marked for the boy by his first trip with a trading caravan; today a boy of this age may begin to work in the fields with his father, or begin to learn a trade, or be sent to school. A girl starts to learn field-work and housework. 852 858

Professions

A boy is expected to learn the profession or ocipinduko in which his father or his mother's brother is expert, and after that, should he wish to learn some other side-line profession, he may apprentice himself. All children, both boys and girls, are expected to learn to cultivate, but that is not counted as a profession. The principal ovipinduko (professions) listed by Childs are: for girls, basket-making, pottery-making, medical practice and divination; for boys, mat-making, wood-working, rope-making, thatching, fishing, apiculture, hunting, smithing, and medical practice and divination. The last three, as has been mentioned above, are "sacred" and entered under special conditions. 462 868 [463]

"Later childhood, then, is the period of technical training during which it is expected that a large amount of economic responsibility will be assumed. A child begins to own property even before this, and from the beginning of childhood will be accounted legally responsible for his actions. It is recognized, however, that he should not be set tasks beyond the experience or ability of his age and that the full responsibility of adulthood will come only with marriage."(1) 866 [672]

The coming of European commerce, industry, and government has created new types of employment for boys and men, some of which cause a prolonged absence from the village and a loosening or severing of kinship ties. There are no estimates of the number of persons employed by Europeans, or the average length of their absence from home. 178 466

ADOLESCENCE(2)

Childs found that the onset of puberty was late among the Ovimbundu, coming between fourteen and sixteen years for girls and between fifteen and seventeen years for boys. Soon after puberty young people generally stop sleeping in the parents' house. The girls congregate in kitchens and each boy builds himself a house, in which he will live through adolescence 882

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.110.
(2) Based on Childs, op.cit., pp.58-9 and 111-18.

and young manhood, and to which he will bring his wife. In this house a kind of trial marriage *(eponji)* takes place. The young man will *oku tumina* ("cause to send") a male friend to ask permission of a girl's mother and also to bring her to his house each night. The girl is called *eponji*. (The custom may also be called *uveisi*, the girl *ombeisi*.) A young man may first *tumina* at about seventeen or eighteen years, if he has sufficient money or goods to make the "betrothal" payment (*itumbelo* - "enticements" or *oku lapula ihuelume* - "chasing away jealousies"). The amount of the payment (which is made to the girl's parents) varies with locality, wealth and status, but is usually about one tenth of the amount of the marriage payment proper. The amounts of both payments are increasing rapidly.(1) The nature of the intercourse is carefully circumscribed, and the girl is warned by her mother not to let intromission take place. Proofs of virginity are required on the marriage morning, and there are severe sanctions against premarital pregnancy. Childs' informants stressed that the chief purpose of the custom is that the two young people should get to know each other as well as possible with marriage in view. Ennis however(2) states that *uveisi* does not necessarily lead to marriage and may be entered upon without the intention of marriage; the girl may leave the man if she does not like him, and if the *uveisi* is broken off both may marry other persons without any difficulties.

INITIATION(3)

Tribal initiation for boys *(oku lisevisa evombo)* and girls *(uso vukei)* is carried on in camps or "schools" in the southern and south-eastern Umbundu chiefdoms, especially in Kalukembe, Kakonda, and Ngalangi. Sporadic instances of individual camps have also occurred recently in Viye, Bailundu, Sambu, Wambu, Cingolo and Cikuma. Even in regions where camps are regularly held, only the children of certain families enter. There appears to have been some passing on of the custom by heredity, and, in general, there is intermarriage only between families and individuals who adhere to the initiation rites. It is not known whether the rites have been taken over by the Ovimbundu from neighbouring peoples, or whether they represent a custom formerly widespread in Umbundu country. Initiation camps are not mentioned by the earlier writers.

Childs gives little information about what goes on in initiation camps, apart from pointing out that in making a definite break from the routine of life they contrast with other aspects of Umbundu education, and that "the hardship and cruelty of initiation camps have their parallel in the trading and slave-raiding expeditions of the past." His statement that "as an 'educational institution' [the initiation camps] do not seem to fit into the culture" is not very clear. From the few details given by Hambly(4) Umbundu camps appear to be identical with those of the tribes to the east, and here one of the most important aspects of the camps is their ritually-emphasised contrast with regular life.(5)

(1) Childs, personal communication.
(2) 1945.
(3) Childs, *op.cit.*, pp.115-7.
(4) (2) 1934, pp.226f.
(5) See McCulloch, 1951, pp.85-91.

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Vakwetuko (lit. "those of the set")[1]

Childs considers that the custom of vacuetuko is probably connected with circumcision and initiation. It does not exist throughout the territory but only in certain families who belong to the order and are said to pass it on by heredity. It seems to have been stronger in the past, but few practising members of the set are now known. All 'cuevalo' or members of the set were in duty bound to render mutual assistance, and all had mutual rights to the property of the others without complaint or remedy. These rights seem to have included that of having intercourse with each other's wives. Injury or even death of one member brought about by another did not allow the injured family to seek revenge or legal redress. It was the duty of the vacuetuko to bury their fellows, themselves digging the grave and attending to all the expenses ordinarily supplied by the family of the deceased. They also had the duty of burying strangers without family who would not be buried by others for fear of defilement or responsibility for their debts.[2] Childs describes the vacuetuko associations as "age-grade sets",[3] but gives no further explanation.

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"With or without initiation rites, adolescence is largely preparation for marriage and full adult life. Traditionally, adolescence is not a time of conflict or stress....Contract and *corvée* labour have brought profound changes, especially for the young men. As for the girls, a few have gone into the towns; relatively few, however, other than those who attend a boarding-school, lead a life essentially different from that which has been traditionally theirs."[4]

MARRIAGE

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Available information concerning degrees of relationship in which marriage is permitted, marriage-payment, polygyny and divorce has been given above.[5] Evumbi[6] and Humbly[7] describe some of the customs and ceremonies connected with marriage.

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For three nights after the commencement of the marriage ceremony the girl sleeps with her own parents, while the married women and six unmarried girls whom she has chosen as her attendants sleep in the house of her husband. On the fourth day she moves to the man's house, bringing her cooking utensils. For the first month, according to Humbly, or, according to Evumbi, the first year, i.e. until the grain is ripe in her own fields, she lives with her husband's mother or aunt; in whose kitchen she cooks food each night to send to her husband in the onjango. When her first child is two or three months old, a present of a pig passes from the girl's mother to her husband.

[606]

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Childs[8] adds that adulthood comes with marriage, and marriage is only recognised as complete when the first child has been born. A child or an adolescent is only a "potential" person *(omunu)* and the permanency

(1) Childs, op.cit., p.115.
(2) Those who buried a man were considered responsible for his debts. Bones
(3) Childs, op.cit., p.39. (4) Ibid., p.117.
(5) p.207. (6) 1938.
(7) 1934, pp 189f. (8) Op.cit., pp.119-20.

885 and stability of his personality (utu - lit. the quality of being a person) is only proved when he enters the state of adulthood at marriage.

DEATH

361 764 Each village has its own burial ground about a mile or so away. The grave is usually dug by the children of the father's/sister.(1) The corpse of a commoner is bound in a supine position and placed in a box before interment. It is usual during the funeral to find out the cause of death, i.e. whether it is the work of spirits or of some living enemy. Accusations of sorcery are frequently made. The corpse in its coffin, slung to a pole between two carriers, responds to questions as to who 'ate him' by forward (affirmative) or backward (negative) movements.(2) In the case described by Hambly,(3) the questions were put by the father's sister. The corpse may also cause its bearers to stop in front of a certain house during the procession through the village, thereby indicating that one of the occupants has caused its death.(4) Should the corpse not give a clear answer, the diviner might be called in to discover the cause of the death. Accusations of sorcery, as has been noted above, are often made within the circle of kin.(5)

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Special cases

766 For *children* the same ceremony was carried out if they were old enough to walk and talk. Otherwise the diviner's services were called upon by the parents. At the death of twins, the mother has to shake a rattle or blow a horn instead of giving the usual greetings to passers-by, as she had to do also while the children were alive.(6)

766 791 At the death of *diviners* and *medicine-men* other members of the profession take charge of the ceremonies. The corpse is tied in a sitting posture and kept thus for three days before burial. No coffin is used. The questioning ceremony is carried out as for a commoner. After the interment the other medicine-men dance "because they have spirit in their heads", and during the dance each eats a living chicken that he carries in his hand. At the side of the grave a dog, a chicken and a goat are killed, and eaten by the mourners. The ocisabuulo's power is apparently thought to linger round the grave, which the chief or village-headman may visit to ask for rain and other favours.(7)

227 766 *Hunters* at death are buried in rock tombs *(onbilia* or *ombje)*, which are usually placed in commanding positions. The skulls of animals which the hunter has killed are piled on top of the tomb. The bones of the deceased hunter are kept in his successor's "house of bows".

766 683 800 *Chiefs*, and possibly also *village headmen*, are buried in specially-constructed enclosures in the villages over which they ruled. The tomb is a small hut with a substantial wooden door, which is surrounded by a strongly-built wooden fence, or it may be a cave. The wives of the chief are buried in the same enclosure. The head of a specially selected

(1) Hambly, (2) 1934, p.268.
(2) Childs, 1949, p.57.
(3) Childs, loc.cit.
(4) Hambly, op.cit., p.268.
(5) Op.cit., p.266.
(6) Ibid.
(7) Ibid., p.270.

The head of a specially selected [767] family has the duty of twisting off the head of the chief, and not until this is done is the chief officially dead. The head is buried for a year, then dug up and transferred to a box, which is also kept in the tomb. The head is questioned at times of stress (such as a drought) in the same way that questions are put to the corpse of a commoner. If the head swings forward, a sacrifice may be necessary to remove the drought. The house of a chief is not burnt at his death (but those of commoners are?); neither may it be repaired in any way, but the succeeding chief must live in it until the structure collapses.(1) 643 765 [767] 768

Mourning for a chief lasts seven days, during which his children and wives wear strips of cowhide on their left wrists. 765

Widows (of chiefs or commoners) must leave their hair loose and wear clothes which conceal them from head to toe. For three days a widow must sleep close to the corpse of her husband, with only a stick between them. During this time she has no food, and her wailing is expected to be almost continuous day and night. When the corpse is tied and prepared for burial relatives support the corpse and make it move towards her so that she may bid it farewell. She does not attend the funeral. At the end of a month of mourning she must lie for one night in the place where her husband lay the night before burial. At the beer-drinking which marks the end of the period of mourning an oviakwalo guides her hand as she distributes the beer.(2)

(1) Bumby, (2) 1954, p.272.
(2) Bumby, op.cit., p.269. Bumby states that mourning for a chief lasts only seven days, while from this information it appears that commoners are mourned for a whole month.

2: McCulloch B-4 (1945-61) 1952 FF13 Mbundu FF13
48

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102
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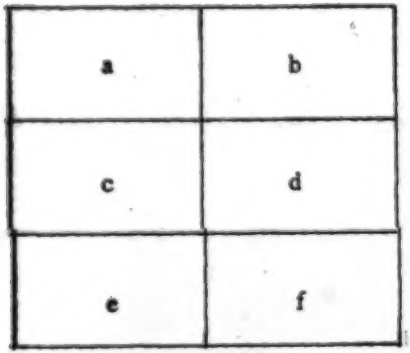

Chart of positions of sections
of End Map

2: McCulloch E-4(1945-51)1952 FP13 Mbundu FP13

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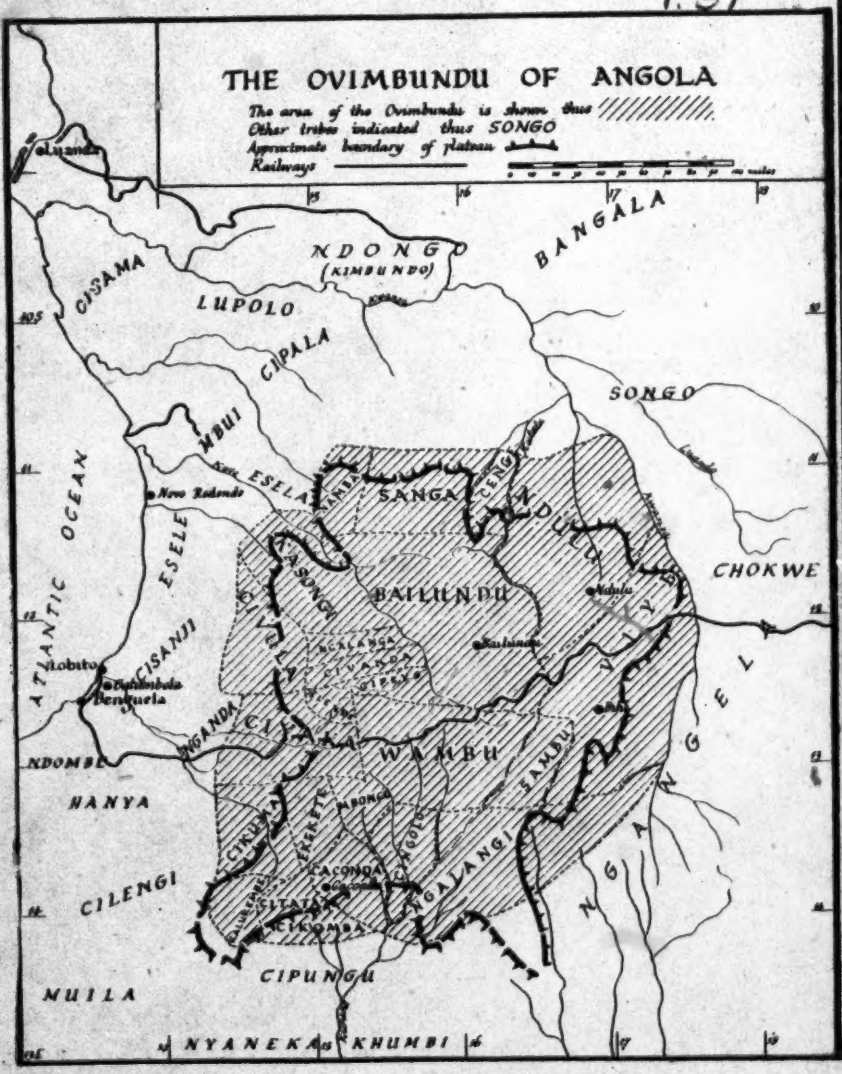
102
131

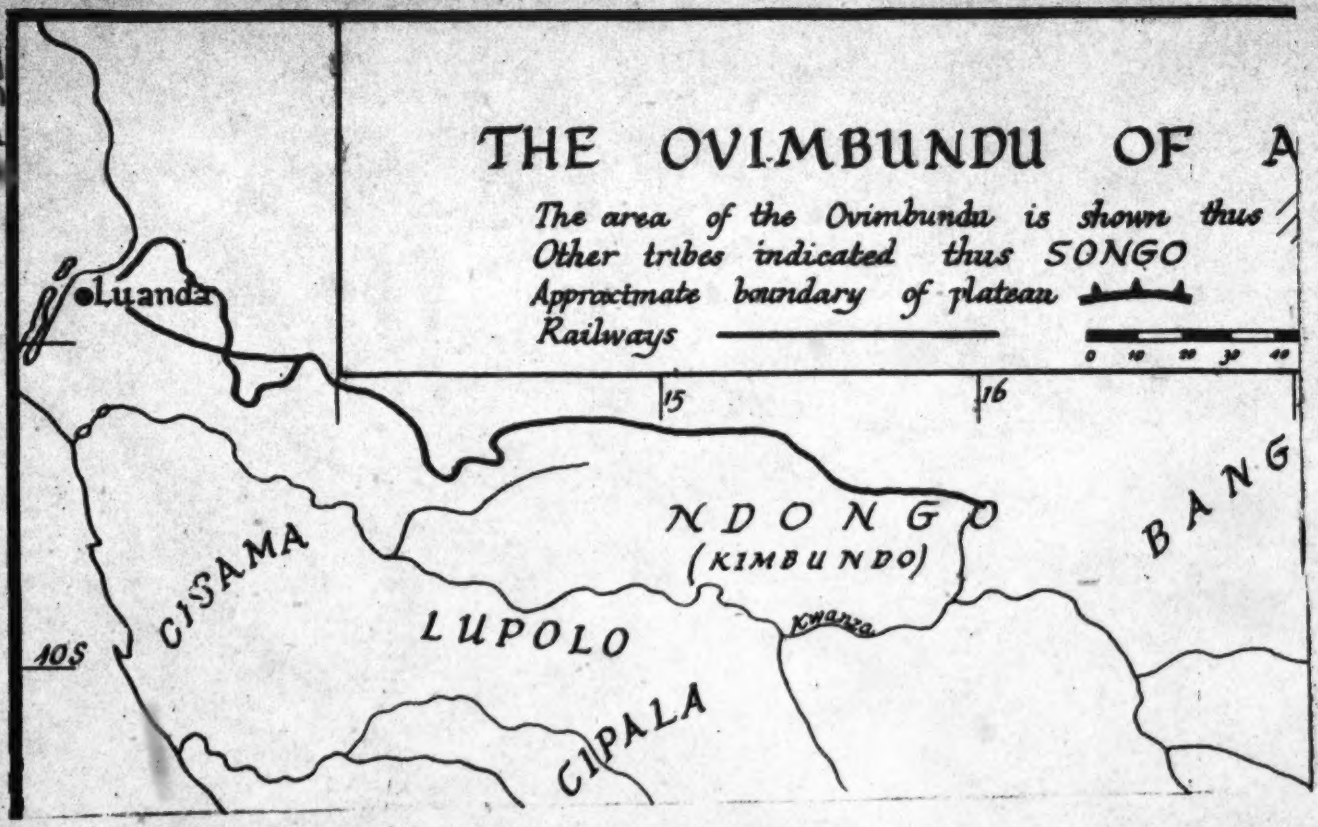
P.51



End Map

S: McCulloch E-4 (1945-61) 1962 FP13 Mbundu FP13

p 52



End Map (a)

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102
131

D 53

VIMBUNDU OF ANGOLA

f the Ovimbundu is shown thus ////////////.
indicated thus SONGO
boundary of plateau

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 miles

16 17 18

BANGALA

DONGO
KIMBUNDO)

Kwanza

10

End map (b)

FP13 Mbundu FP13
S. McCulloch E-4 (1945-51) 1952
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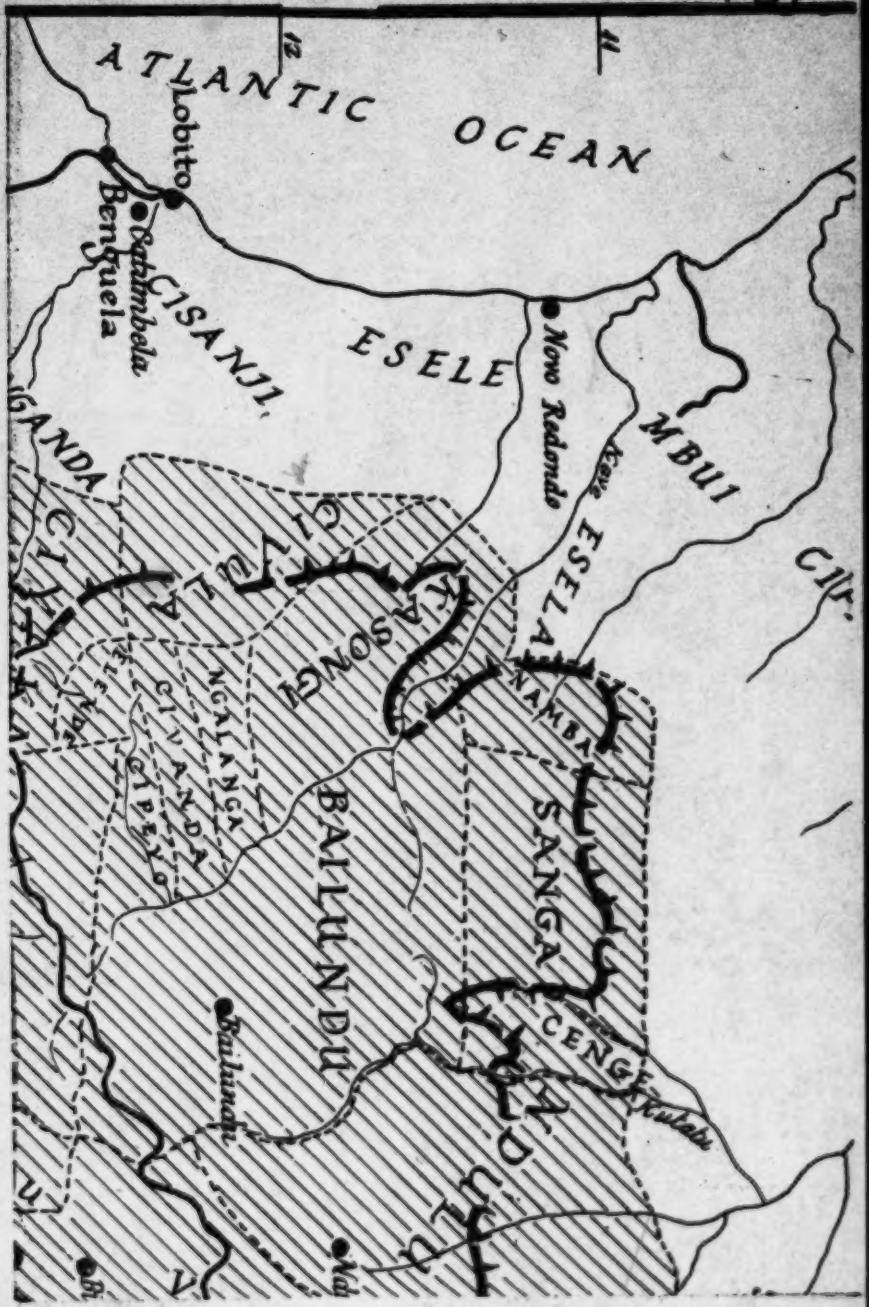
102
131

101
102
131



End Map (c)

S. McCulloch F-4 (1945-61) 1955 FP13 Mimeo FP18
p. 55
SONGO
SANGA
CHOKWE
BAILUNDU
Nabulu
Bailundo
Bie
Lunda
Kuanza
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102
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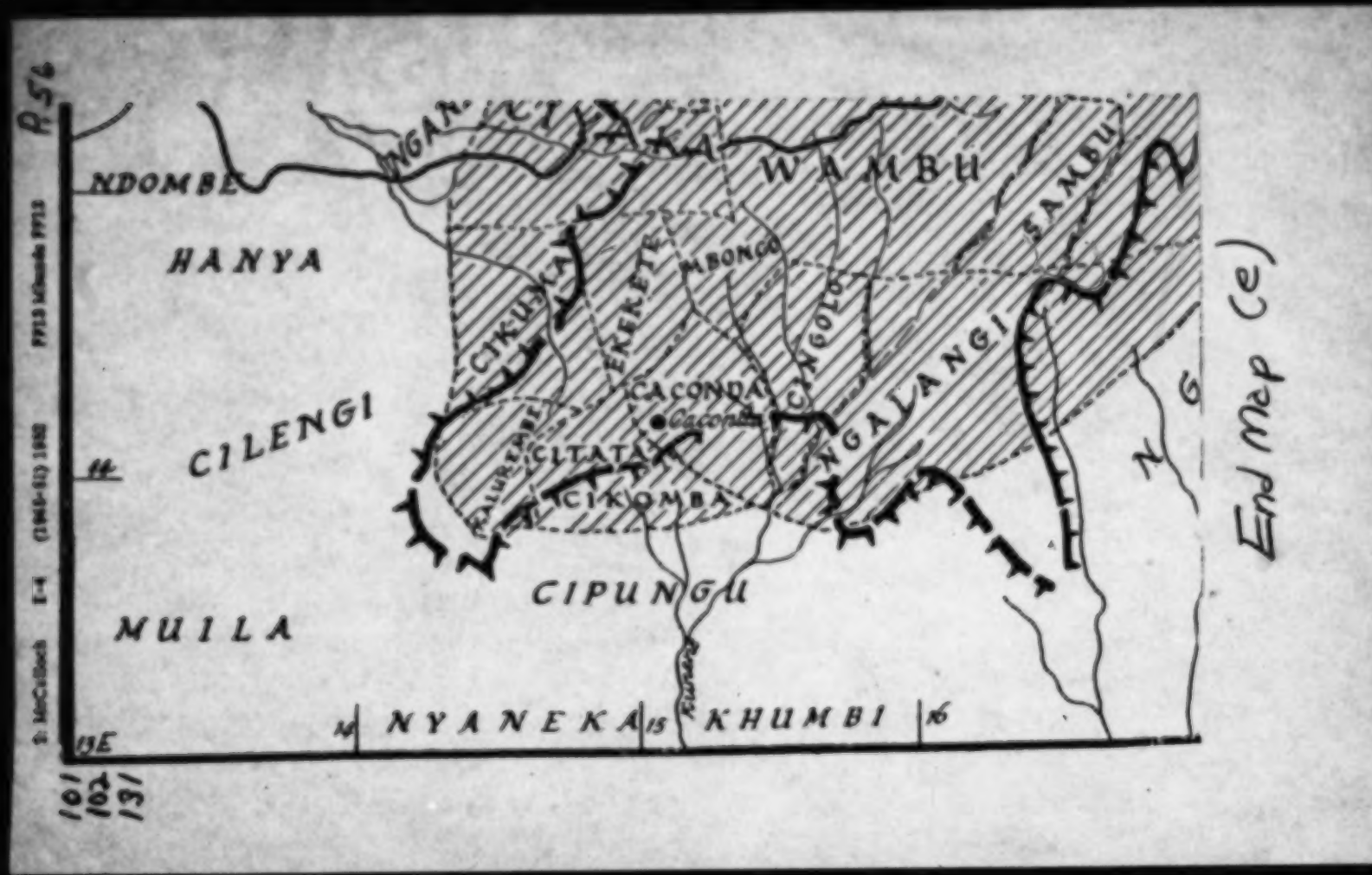
End Map (P)


R.56
NDOMBE
HANYA
WAMBU
CILENGI
CIKUEJA
ENRETE
MBONGO
CACONDA
CIKOMBA
CIPUNGU
MUILA
NYANEKA
KHUMBI
SAMBU
NGALANGI
End Map (e)
13E
14
15
16

End Map (F)

2: McCulloch
622, 643

FP13 Mbundu FP13

/For ceremonial activities of the village headman and chief see 793./

2: McCulloch
632

FP13 Mbundu FP13

/The large village, which might legitimately be considered a town, is listed under category 621./